

IMAGE-DRIVEN WORSHIP
FINDING THE COMMON LANGUAGE

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To My Family

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GLOSSARY

Autonomous Individualism – maintains that each person is independent in terms of destiny and accountability.

Christendom – What church and mission looked like in the post-Constantine period.

Christology – The Biblical teachings of Jesus and about Jesus.

Emerging – newly formed, coming to the surface.

Enlightenment, The – A movement in thought of the late 18th century stressing scientific discovery, education, individual freedom and democracy.

Epistemology – philosophical theory of the method we use to obtain our knowledge.

Futuring – an act of raising the bar, measuring the horizon, scanning alternative scenarios, studying the images of the future, and then getting the church to do some prospective thinking.

Hopeful-cynic – a person who believes the church is in trouble but is hopeful God will step in and bring revival.

Linguistics – study of the nature and structure of language

Make sense – sense is the ability to receive stimuli through any of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste). To make sense means to be understandable.

Modernism – closely connected with the enlightenment and is centered in reason.

Moral Relativism – what is true for you, is true for you. What is true for me, is true for me. Moral values become a matter of personal opinion or private judgement rather than something grounded in objective truth.

Narcissistic Hedonism – the classic “I, me, mine” mentality that places personal pleasure and fulfillment at the forefront of concerns.

Orthodoxy – that which is accepted, customary, or traditional

Pluralism – emphasizes diversity and difference over unity and sameness

Pluralization – when individuals are confronted with many ideologies and faith options. They suggest that no one perspective or religious persuasion has the inside track.

Post-Christian – Someone who was born and raised outside of any church influence and is now heavily influenced by our pluralistic, postmodern culture and values.

Post-modern – refers to the mind-set and its products. It is reactionary to things modern and is not clear and positive in what it is.

Pre-literate Culture – A society where only a few could read or write.

Privatization – process where a chasm is created between public and private spheres of life. Spiritual things are placed within the private arena.

Reductive Naturalism – only those things that can be empirically verified in nature can be known.

Sacred – dedicated to God, reverence toward.

Secularization – process by which something becomes secular.

Shekhinah – Hebrew for divine presence

Worldview – lens through which we look at the world and therefore think about the world.

ABSTRACT

This work is designed to help church leaders to focus on the arduous task of connecting with culture in worship. Why? Simply put, to help culture connect with Christ.

We have the message, “This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in Him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life,” (The Message). What many church leaders are in need of is a new method of communicating that message. Since the postmodern culture is Image-driven, media is that language.

CHAPTER 1

THRIVING IN CULTURE

Introduction

For over five years, this author has used media, (i.e. film clips, stills, computer generated images, and videos), in the worship gathering. Image-driven worship has helped the congregation prepare to hear from God as well as direct their attention on the things of God. Media is the language that has aided this pastor in presenting the gospel.

The purpose of this project and why this author believes it is particularly significant, is two-fold. It continues to inform this writer's ministry as a local church pastor, and secondly this author believes that many pastors and other church leaders will find it a useful ministry style. This author has chosen to explore how the church might utilize media during a worship service as a means of communicating the gospel in a post-modern culture.

Since 2001 this author has been using media in worship to help communicate The good news in a clear and understandable fashion. My research and writing has led me to a better understanding of the emerging culture's way of learning and processing and experiencing God. The post-modern culture is image-driven not word based. Church leaders must learn to speak in the language of the people with whom they wish to minister and communicate. With hundreds of languages in the world today, this is hardly a new concept in ministry, but it is a new language that

must be learned by the church.

It has been said that people do not fear change, they fear being changed. The church needs to change in order to minister to the emerging culture. The post-modern is both outside the church and in the pew. Our responsibility is to present the gospel in the language that is best understood by the culture. Media is the common language of the post-modern culture.

We begin with five presuppositions:

- 1) The fact is that most mainline churches are in serious decline. Mainline denominations are losing membership annually. Pastors and other denominational leaders are looking for answers.
- 2) We live in the first major civilization that has built itself without a religious foundation. Those born between 1960 and 1980, commonly called the “baby boomers,” represent the first generation without that religious foundation.
- 3) When missionaries enter a new culture, they have to make adjustments when embracing its people and learning their language. It is no different when learning to minister to the post-modern, the language must be learned and the culture understood.
- 4) We have to learn to speak the language of culture if we wish to communicate. The post-modern communicates using a different language than the modern. Those in the emerging culture communicate through images.
- 5) Media is the supreme post-modern art form.

Assuming the presuppositions are all true, there are certain questions that need to be asked and demand an answer. Knowing that media is the language of

culture, do you know how it can be used? If you could begin using media in your church, what would you do first and would you use it?

How many more people might you connect to the Word of God by using media? How effective can media be as the language of the culture?

The effective congregation of the 21st century will be part of the church that makes use of multimedia. The emerging church is learning to speak the language of the culture and uses technology that shapes culture. Are you willing to use multimedia in your church in order to speak the language of the culture?

Images are the universal language. How can images be used in the church to communicate the gospel and in particular during worship?

The Problem Of Speaking Different Languages

With over 6,500 dialects spoken in the world today, there is a need to add yet another two languages for good communication. One is the language spoken and understood by the modern, and the other is the language spoken and understood by the post-modern. Every person regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity communicates and learns best either by the modern or the post-modern language. This same principle also applies to the people who attend a worship gathering.

When a missionary desires to go to a particular mission field, they begin by learning about the people to whom they will be ministering. They attend language school so they might speak and understand the people's dialect. Often, more than just dialect is involved. The culture of those being evangelized must also be understood. This kind of learning is best served through cross-cultural studies. If missionaries do not know the

people they are trying to reach, how effective can they be? Missionaries have followed this formula for years. You cannot speak a common language with any culture without first understanding something about that culture.

In the United States there are thousands of Christian churches most of which speak English. There is however a growing number of Latino churches who speak a variation of the Spanish language. For a Caucasian pastor who speaks only English to go into a Latino congregation and to attempt to communicate is close to impossible at best. If that same Caucasian pastor were to go into an English speaking post-modern congregation and attempt to communicate in a modern language, that would also be close to impossible.

The problem of speaking a different language is that the post-modern is not listening. The church needs to awaken to a culture that has already left modernism behind. We live in the information age, so we want our data crunched. Crunching information is a better way of communicating with the post-modern. What the post-modern really wants is not more information but God contact, an experience with the living God. The post-modern is looking for and responds best to image-driven communication as opposed to information as the reason for communication. Just as Gutenberg once revolutionized oral tradition by putting information in print, so now media has captured information in images for the post-modern. To get the attention of the culture of the digital age, the church cannot continue doing ministry from a modern mindset. “The post-modern craves experience not information. Because our culture is producing emerging generations who learn visually via television, films, and the internet, we must become three-dimensional in our preaching, incorporating visual elements not as

a replacement for words but in addition to words.”¹ There is always a new generation to minister to but the church must now quickly learn a new language not just to communicate with the millenniums and Gen X, but also with busters and boomers. We live in a post-modern culture where communication is more visual. It is a culture where in order for the church to communicate to the post-modern, the church must be digital in its thinking and image-driven. The post-modern world is fairly new, and began to emerge only within the last 25 years.

Figure 1.1
Major Culture Time Periods ²
Ancient World 2500 BC – 500 AD
Medieval World . . . 500 – 1500
Modern World 1500-2000
Post-modern World 2000+

It is the church’s opportunity to be proactive in communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ in a post-modern world to people who speak a new language. “We can not go on seeing ourselves simply as pastors and teachers; we need to see ourselves as a new kind of missionary.”³ We must not only know the language of the post-modern but use it throughout our churches. What we are experiencing in culture is much more than a generation gap but a change in the way people view the world and learn. The problem of

¹ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003) , 188.

² Ibid., 44.

³ Ibid., 69.

the church speaking a language different than the post-modern world is, who is hearing the church?

The Need To Speak The Language Of Culture

Most churches do not speak a language that makes sense or is understandable to a culture asking spiritual questions. In the second chapter of Acts, God empowered a small church (120 members) at Pentecost; they spoke to the culture and the culture understood them. Peter and the other disciples all spoke a language and everyone could understand. For many today, Church does not make *sense* – the dictionary defines sense as the ability to receive stimuli through any of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). To make sense means to be understandable. The Apostle Paul understood communicating with the right language. When Paul was in Athens, he encountered Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who took him to the Areopagus to hear him out. The Apostle began communicating with them in a language they understood: “So Paul, standing before the Council, addressed them as follows: “Men of Athens, I noticed that you are very religious, for as I was walking along I saw your many altars. And one of them had this inscription on it—‘To an Unknown God.’ You have been worshiping him without knowing who he is, and now I wish to tell you about him (Acts 17:22f).”⁴ Paul began to communicate within their culture. The people had a point of entrance and Paul entered in.

Jesus was the expert on speaking the right language. Jesus always knew His audience and communicated in their dialect. Whenever religious leaders tried to trap

⁴ All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from *New Living Translation*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

Jesus by quoting from the Law of Moses, Jesus would likewise recite Scripture. When talking with the common folk He taught as the “Living Word.” That’s why when Jesus would begin by saying, “A farmer went out to plant some seed, some fell on a footpath, some on shallow soil, and some fell among thorns and some on good soil “The seeds that fell on good soil produced thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times.” (See Mt. 13:3ff). And all those who were involved in agriculture (about 90% of the people made their living from farming) would lean in closer to see what the itinerate preacher was going to say. Why were they listening? He was speaking their language; they knew all about planting seeds.

Jesus had the attention of everyone who had ever owed someone else money when He said, “A man loaned money to two people...but neither of them could repay him” (see Lk. 7:41ff). The audience leaned in closer wondering the way they might get rid of their bondage and were told how God forgives sin. Jesus knew the language and communicated in vivid images.

Jesus begins His next story with, “A man had two sons”, (see Lk. 15:11ff). He went on to say how the younger son was wanting out and squandered everything he owned. Every parent who felt the pain of a wayward son or daughter learned how God deals with a repentant rebel.

In all these parables Jesus was teaching something about the Kingdom of God, but He also taught in a language that was image-driven. The people saw what Jesus said. He connected with people. Effective communication is not about compromises. The Gospel must be presented clearly and in the language of the culture.

Jesus had His hand on the pulse of the culture. He understood that by using parables, delivered in the oral tradition, He could teach biblical truth and the people could relate. Many people are visual learners. “As the sermon mutated from a storytelling to an exegetical experience in the mass print era, it must mutate again, along with other elements of the Christian experience, into a form that speaks to this electronic culture.”⁵ This writer believes every Christian must become a student of culture. If we are to communicate the greatest message in the world to large numbers of people, then there is a critical need to speak the language of culture. Contrary to the thought of many clergy, interpreting the Gospel to our culture does not mean abandoning the message (sermon). The church must speak a language that culture uses and understands.

The Challenge Of Finding A Common Language

In order to discover a common cultural language, two things must be recognized: acknowledging a common language spoken by culture, and learning this new way of communicating. This new language must be learned on two levels. Seminaries must train pastors who are waiting for their first appointment. Pastors who are currently serving churches must recognize there is a problem in communication.

Some seminaries are bastions of the printed page and analysis. Preaching classes teach good composition, proper movement, correct theology, but at times neglect cultural literacy. In order to gain cultural insight of language you would need to study at a school of world mission. There needs to be a “school of cultural mission” located on every seminary campus, with classes in the core curriculum. Many seminaries offer an excellent theological education with exercises in ministry. Pastors are taught how to lead

⁵ Len Wilson, *The Wired Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999) , 42.

church and are encouraged to be the church and learn to talk like the church. There exists a post-modern, post-Christian, pluralistic culture that does not know or understand “church language.” This emerging generation is being raised without any experience of church, good or bad, and they have no anchor or truth to hold onto. “There used to be an old world, then a new world, then the third world, but now all three are being swept up in a new new world.”⁶ Finding a common language is imperative. Not only is there a generational change as there is with every generation but now there is a major shift from modern to post-modern. “The gap is not so much between the generations as it is between the insiders and the outsiders.”⁷ The Christian mandate has always been to make disciples of Jesus Christ. To communicate any message means there has to be a listener, someone who is attentive to what is being said. The post-modern starts with a different set of presuppositions than does the modern. Dan Kimball gives us some insight: “The word post-modern represents a change in world view moving from the values and beliefs of the modern era to the new post-modern era, which rejects many modern values and beliefs.”⁸

There was a time when language was not as important, a time when almost everyone in this country was at minimum, familiar with Judeo/Christian values. If not a common language, at least common values could be found. With the advent of post-modernism, most of everything in culture is changing. The church has something to say, something important. The problem is that congregations must use the language of the post-modern, not just to be heard but to be understood. The message must be understood

⁶ Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Post-modern Matrix*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998) , 12.

⁷ Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) , 91.

⁸ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*. , 49.

by those outside the church as well as those sitting in pews. “Anyone used to doing ministry—and thinking of church and worship services—in a modern way will find it hard to grasp new ways to engage a post-modern culture.”⁹ Does the church have an option? No, not if we are to communicate with the culture we now live in. The church is using a language of a literate culture in a post-literate visual age. To see and not read is descriptive of the post-modern. Leith Anderson zeros in on the challenge for finding a way of communicating with culture: “Frankly, evangelical Christianity has done well on revelation (the Bible) but poorly on relevance, (the culture).”¹⁰ Lyle Schaller asks the right question when he asks, “where will this generation go to church?” People are not coming to church—because they have been to church and all they expect to receive is information about God. Post-moderns do not want information about God, they are looking for an experience of God and they don’t believe they’ll find it in church. Michael Slaughter, senior pastor of Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Ohio, tells us why the post-modern is not finding an experience with God in church: “We shall fail in communicating Jesus to this generation with 60 minutes of literate—linear worship.”¹¹ We need to change methodology. Sometimes people in the church confuse core values with cultural practices. Determine what the core values are for the church and then everything else is open to change. Finding a common language in which the church can communicate with this post-modern, post-literate, post-Christian culture is the challenge that lies ahead.

⁹ Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004) , 16.

¹⁰ Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1998) , 17.

¹¹ Michael Slaughter, *Out on the Edge* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998) , 62.

What And Who Is Post-modern

In defining post-modern, it is best to attempt to describe what it looks like and how a post-modern might think. The word “post-modern” first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1949.”¹² Even an accurate description of post-modern in 1949 would not ring true today. Post-modernity and the post-modern are continually in flux. There is barely enough time to formulate a definition before the accuracy has once again changed. “Post-modernism can neither be collapsed into a single all-encompassing definition nor dismissed with a single critique.”¹³ Because culture is where we live and where we do ministry, the church is obligated to understand post-modernity and the language the post-modern communicates in.

In order to begin to understand the current culture, one might look at its history and how it emerged into its present form. “Post-modernism has its origins in a school of thought known as existentialism. Existentialism says there is no meaning in life. Existentialism is not totally despairing; one can create their own personal meaning.”¹⁴ With a foundation laid in existential thought, it is easy to understand how truth becomes relative to the post-modern. “A post-modernist might argue that post-modernism is anything you want it to be.”¹⁵ The playing field for the post-modern encompasses all of life, including that of religion but with no absolutes. “Post-modern Ethicists look neither to absolutes, as Christians do, nor to empirical considerations, as the modernists do, but solely to the individual’s choice, Morality too is relative, a construction either of the

¹² Spencer Burke. *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations About God, Community, and Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 25.

¹³ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006) , 43.

¹⁴ Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *Loving God With All Your Mind: Thinking as a Christian in the Post-modern World*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1987) , 118-119.

¹⁵ Arthur Asa Berger. *The Portable Post-modernist*. (Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Oxford, Altamira Press, 2003) , 45.

culture or of the individual.”¹⁶ A post-modern would not hold to any prerequisites nor would there be a problem in holding a conflicting opinion. “Post-moderns are just as interested in giving their account of ‘truth’ and ‘morality’ from their own perspective even if it’s to say that neither truth nor morality in any ultimate and binding way exists.”¹⁷ What remains for the post-modern is a personal satisfaction that their opinion is of high value, if only to themselves, and by stating it they are still not locked into a meta narrative that would obstruct their worldview. “What has replaced the world views that once sought to encompass the whole of existence in their understanding are now privatized worldviews, worldviews that are valid for no one but the person whose world it is and whose view it is.”¹⁸ Since there is no narrative that connects the events of life into a single meaning, the narrative is relevant only to that individual. Post-modernism has influenced the culture by making truth relative and suggesting no absolutes exist. This has not only affected the culture in general but has also left an impact on the church. “Post-modernity has caused some Christians to become much more accepting of divergent religious opinions.”¹⁹ A Christian, who is tolerant of other beliefs, is not the same as a person accepting other religious opinions. One of the earliest confessions of the church was “Jesus is Lord,” which meant, Lord of all.

Christianity no longer has a privileged position in post-modernity. The post-modern culture has spawned a new pluralistic worldview. “This new pluralism is witnessed in Charles, the Prince of Wales. The future King of England and head of the

¹⁶ Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *Loving God With All Your Mind.* , 78.

¹⁷ David Wells. *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Post-modern World.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005) , 75

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹ Michael Pollock, Gailyn VanRheenen, Douglas McConnell. *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues And Trends.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005) , 116.

Anglican Church bears the title, ‘Defender of the Faith’. Charles has already spoken to this, preferring to alter the title to read, ‘Defender of Faith’.”²⁰ This is a not so subtle illustration of pluralism within the post-modern culture. “In pluralism the assumptions of inclusiveness are comforting notions because they remove the personal responsibility of an individual having to choose.”²¹ If everyone’s point of view and belief system is valid, then there is no incorrect opinion in a pluralistic culture. For the post-modern, there is nothing remarkable about saying two contradictory things concerning what a person believes. But Christianity maintains that there is in fact ultimate truth and there is an objective authority for all of humankind. “Much of post-modernism has rejected the idea of an external God who has the right to prescribe what is right, and what is true.”²² Jesus declared that, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one can come to the Father except through me,” (Jn. 14:6). Ravi Zacharias writes, “that truth by definition will always be exclusive.”²³ The post-modern culture finds absolutes objectionable whereas modernists and Christians both believe in truth. “In the coming years, a pluralist worldview will impose an enormous amount of pressure upon Christians and ministers alike to concede that Jesus Christ is merely a way to God and not the way.”²⁴

Our post-modern culture with its pluralistic worldview challenges the church to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a compassionate way that is understandable and relevant. As disturbing as post-modernity might appear to the church, God has provided

²⁰ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first Century Listeners*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001) , 34.

²¹ Ibid., 99.

²² Millard J. Erickson. *The Post-modern World: Discerning the Times and the Spirit of Our Age*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002) , 68.

²³ Ravi K. Zacharias. *Can Man Live Without God?* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishers, 1994) , 126.

²⁴ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World*. , 96.

opportunity for His message of hope to be communicated in an unprecedented fashion, through media.

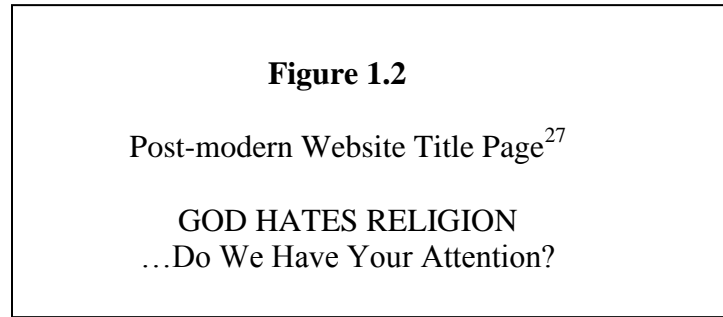
What The Church Can Assume

Spiritual hunger and awareness are on the rise, and the desire to express one's spirituality is now becoming much more commonplace among emerging generations.²⁵ These same people are not antireligious, they just have not figured out how to make it real. There is a vacuum in every one of us that needs filling. It is a spiritual vacuum that can be satisfied only when God's Spirit fills us. Since we are all spiritual beings, made in the image of God (see Gn. 1:26f), there is a yearning for spirituality. That is not to say that unchurched people are seeking the God of the Bible, but they do recognize there is a god out there somewhere and they have a desire to know this god. The church can assume there is a hunger for God in culture and a need to have their spiritual needs met.

Many in our culture are thinking "yes" to God and "no" to church. "With their suspicion of institutional religion, their rebellion against being told what they must believe, and their strong commitment to freedom of choice, Gen Xer's are eclectic in their approach to religion."²⁶ Generation X is simply voicing what is emerging from the post-Christian culture. It seems that boomers, busters, Xer's, and millennials, (sometimes called mosaics) are all saying something similar. They want their spiritual needs met, and it has to be an authentic experience. They are skeptical of religion but hopeful of knowing God. A web site representing a ministry trying to communicate with the post-modern culture sums up what post-moderns are needing to hear:

²⁵ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 87.

²⁶ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 125.



Many people are developing an appetite for the spiritual, they want that void filled. Post-modernity is an in-between time. Modernity is over, but we have not arrived at what is next. Americans believe almost anything, as long as it is not in the Bible, but they are also seeking a more spiritual approach to life. Post-modern culture tends to reject Christianity (or any organized religion) as the standard bearer for truth. Church-growth professor George Hunter tells us that “this generation is the first generation raised totally outside the church. The culture is not ‘agnostic’ but rather ‘ignostic’.”²⁸ (Ignostic is a word coined by Hunter). To be ignostic is to be ignorant concerning biblical concepts. The ignostic has a tendency to create God in their image. Without the biblical foundation, the ignostic’s belief system becomes culture driven where everything is relative.

To help avoid any off-centeredness of his day, John Wesley used what he called the quadrilateral.²⁹ Wesley maintained there must be a balance between experience, reason, tradition and Scripture when discerning the teachings of the church, but always placed the weightier emphasis on Scripture. The post-modern has no tradition in their

²⁷ The Meeting House is a Christian Church in Oakville, Ontario, Canada. A member of the Brethern In Christ (BIC) denomination. Web site...<http://www.themeetinghouse.ca/> (accessed March 21, 2002). No revised edit date.

²⁸ George Hunter, *How to Reach Secular People*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992) , 23.

²⁹ Thomas Oden. *John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1994) , Only in a few places can the quadrilateral method be seen deliberately at work.

memory because they have not grown up in the church. Scripture does not hold a high priority for the post-modern, even for the post-modern who attends church. We live in a culture with Bible-believing churches but they are filled with people who do not read the Bible. It is impossible to follow a god you know nothing about. It is difficult to use reason when there has never been a foundation. The post-modern leans almost entirely upon what their experience has dictated. They are suspicious of organized religion, they don't have a biblical knowledge, there is no tradition of religion in their lifetime, and so they search for spiritual meaning. What the church must assume is the post-modern is in need of a new experience, this one with the living God. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch share their suggestions of how the church might respond to this post-Christian culture: "At the risk of sounding crass, and without surrendering either the inner meaning or the countercultural implications of the gospel, the church needs to seriously consider this element of design and style if it is going to meaningfully communicate its message to a sophisticated, design—savvy, post-modern audience."³⁰ Once again there is a need to learn the language of the post-modern. "Churches cannot stand apart from society and invite people to come to them on their terms."³¹

The church can assume a spiritual emptiness in post-modern culture, and the church has been given the mandate to help meet this spiritual need. Since the post-modern has its reservations about organized religion, the church must change its way of presenting the gospel. The new language needs to be creative, one that is understood by culture, church and unchurched, and one that clearly presents the life-giving message that Jesus Christ offers real life. Communication with the post-modern will require that the

³⁰ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation For the 21st Century Church*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2003) , 185.

³¹ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next*. , 39.

church make many changes. The church is resistant to change, but God is continually doing new things.

What Church Leaders Dare Not Assume

“From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the temper of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take” (see 1 Chr. 12:32). What if the church had leaders like the sons and daughters of Issachar who not only understood the times but also knew then what to do? Church leaders cannot assume ministry will continue to be done much the same as it was done 50 years ago. God does his work through new wineskins and the church leader must practice both openness and discernment. The new leader cannot depend on the latest program to be handed down from denominational headquarters to accomplish what God wants to do in His church. God is doing a new thing.

The post-modern culture necessitates that church leaders learn a language that they can understand. This is one of the most exciting times to be called by God as a leader in His church. “Why is it we can’t see, much less seize, all the opportunities passing by us? Why do we let greatness pass by? Maybe it’s because we want to live planned lives, whereas the Bible teaches us to live prepared lives.”³² Malcolm Muggeridge’s motto was: “Never forget that only dead fish swim with the tide.”³³ Church leaders must recognize a post-modern culture has emerged and it is not business as usual.

³² Leonard Sweet, *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998), 14.

³³ *Ibid.*, 87.

Bill Easum writes, “Churches wanting to break free from the quagmire of their dysfunctional systems and climb out of their downward death spiral must learn to feel, think, and act differently than they do now. The times in which we live require us to change our life metaphors, something akin to rewiring the human brain.”³⁴ Things that used to work no longer work; it is the age of new paradigms. No church leader can assume that they can continue to minister as a modern.

The modern age has ended and has been followed by post-modernism. With the emergence of this new culture comes the responsibility of the church leader to do ministry, not in the same old way but in a new language. To those for whom a steady stream of public complaint against the post-modern culture has become a cottage industry, it is time we heard the words: “Get over it”—then “Get ahead of it”!³⁵ To get ahead can also mean a return to what Robert Webber refers to as the “ancient future”. This will be examined in a later chapter.

In 1998, some 9,000 churches across the United States closed their doors. Many of these churches closed because to keep them open would have meant they would have had to change. In this writer’s own conference, the Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, twenty churches have closed their doors in the past eight years.³⁶ To complete the story, many congregations who still do ministry have been realigned into parishes, which allow churches to reduce their financial responsibility while maintaining a pastoral presence. Bill Easum tells us, “Three out of four established churches will close their doors in the next 30 years and that the churches most vulnerable

³⁴ Bill Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side: No Rules Just Clues*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000) , 39.

³⁵ Leonard Sweet, *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*. , 84.

³⁶ *Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church Journal*, (Published by the Nebraska Annual Conference Committee on Publication. 1997-2004).

are those with 80 to 200 in membership.” Churches that are real small often speak an old language that is common to everyone in that group. These parishioners are not looking for growth or necessarily revival, they simply like to worship together but recognize they are dying and it will be only a matter of time before they close their doors. The mega-churches are driven by other characteristics and a desire to “experience” God. The post-modern wants to encounter God during worship, not just to hear about Him.

The decline in the mainline denominations might be attributed in part to the fact that, “throughout much of the last century, most old denominations in America measured the strength of congregations with two numbers; total membership and money raised.”³⁷ To measure a church’s strength by using numbers is a symptom of a declining congregation or denomination. The church in Acts was sorely outnumbered by the non-Christian world and had limited resources, and yet even the gates of hell could not compete with the church. The early church was known for its love, they had found something that made sense in life and that filled them with purpose. The first-century Christian had experienced an authentic relationship with the risen Christ and they wanted to share it with the world.

When it comes to our post-modern culture church leaders have a mandate to communicate the gospel. Leonard Sweet writes, “God is releasing streams of living water on this planet. The floodgates of heaven are open and the latter rain is falling. God isn’t so much creating a new church as a new world. What we are in the midst of now is more than a ‘reformation’. It is more than an awakening. We have no name for it

³⁷ Paul Nixon, *Healing Spiritual Amnesia: Remembering What it Means to be the Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004) , 70.

because it is something totally strange and new.”³⁸ It is up to every church leader to find out what God is up to and then help everyone else get on board.³⁹

It Is No Longer 1950

The Bishop of a United Methodist Conference opened the meeting, and, with a sarcastic smile, raised one fist in the air and shouted to the large assembly, “If the 1950s ever come back again, we’re ready.” Although the Bishop’s introduction was meant to be humorous there was also seriousness about the comment. The audience laughed but they also recognized that many churches have been waiting for the 1950s to return. That is, many churches have not made any substantial changes in the way they attempt to communicate the gospel of Christ in the culture in which they live. These churches and many church leaders are still living in a modern world while culture is post-modern.

It is not an easy task for any church to make a change of this magnitude, even though making the change will determine the survival of the congregation. “The transition from modernity to post-modernity represents a seismic shift that can result in churches becoming paralyzed in the midst of the shock waves.”⁴⁰ Many churches are in the institutional phase which makes any kind of change next to impossible. It is what makes it hard to move a church service from 11:00 AM to 10:30 AM, change the color of paint in the narthex, or elect a new church treasurer. Here is where the incongruence

³⁸ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Salsa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2000) , 88.

³⁹ Henry Blackaby. *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998) , This idea is for all believers. Every Christian is to discover what God wants accomplished and then become a part of it. We are not to do our own thing and then enlist God only to bless it.

⁴⁰ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next* , 19.

becomes obvious; the church is a living organism not a stagnant organization. When the church is full of old wineskins, change is never received or tolerated.

In order to keep the institution afloat, certain things must be in place. One of the first and most obvious maintainers of the status quo is a barrage of programs set upon the churches. Not all programs are bad, but neither are they all expedient. A program typically is introduced and individuals are recruited to drive the program. The program is propelled by the institution as activity, often times never meeting the stated objective or at least no way to adequately measure it. A philosophy is developed that states; Got a problem --- Get a program. When one program is exhausted, another is invented while never asking the question...what happened? Paul Nixon cuts to the heart of the matter as he identifies the issue facing the modern church, "The troubling question that we should all be asking is simply whether God is gaining hold of young hearts within our established churches."⁴¹ Is the church being the church, or is the language so archaic that not only do the post-modern not understand what's being said but they are not even listening. When a church becomes program driven, there comes with it a loss of spirituality. And with that loss also comes a loss of power. John Wesley stated his greatest fear for Methodism: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodist should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid least they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power."⁴² As institutional churches, Wesley's greatest fear has become a reality. For a number of years now, many churches have looked like churches, and they have sounded like churches, albeit from the 1950's,

⁴¹ Paul Nixon, *Healing Spiritual Amnesia*, 62.

⁴² John Wesley, "Thoughts upon Methodism" in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 9, The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design Bicentennial ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 527.

but are they being the church. Since the creation of the church at Pentecost, the church has needed to understand the culture in order to do ministry.

Where Should We Be

In the United States there are over 294,000 congregations.⁴³ The choice of death or resurrection will be up to each congregation. Before resurrection takes place there must always be a burial. Since each church always stands one generation away from extinction, it's important that the burial be quick so that resurrection can take place. Having said that, the church must attain a balance between stability and change. In order to change, some people need understanding, others need time to go through grief of change and still others need pressure to change. Each church leader will have to be sensitive to each parishioner.

Congregations must make the transition from modern to post-modern thinking. "Like the Titanic, the modern world has taken on water, and is sinking fast."⁴⁴ There is a rapid change happening in culture which has left entire denominations wondering where the church should be. For many church leaders there is a consensus that the church is somewhere between the present and 1950 with a high need to somehow get ahead of the post-modern. Post-modern uses snippets of information to help define it, but the one thing we know for sure is post-modern culture is no longer modern. So the church needs to be beyond the modern culture and relating and speaking as part of post-modernism. "Because seekers are constantly changing, we must be sensitive to them like Jesus was;

⁴³ Leonard Sweet, *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 16.

⁴⁴ Leonard Sweet. *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999), 23.

we must be willing to meet them on their own turf and speak to them in ways they understand.”⁴⁵ The church needs to be doing ministry like Jesus, being sensitive, flexible, understandable, and adaptable. And not with its feet firmly planted in modernity waiting for something to happen. Change is required if the church is to have an opportunity to share its good news with newly emerging, post-modern, post-Christian culture.

Church leaders attempting to do ministry in the emerging culture have discovered two fronts needing to be affected by change. First, church leaders deal with congregations that need to change, but not everyone is willing to make that transition. Some hold to traditions of the past, where change sounds sacrilegious and where the King James Version was equal to biblical Hebrew and Greek, even though the KJV didn’t appear until 1611. Ancient-future leader Leonard Sweet reassures those in the church who feel that change is to be feared that, “the mystery of the gospel is this: It is always the same (content) and it is always changing, (containers).”⁴⁶ For church leaders to know a change is needed is not enough. Secondly, church leaders need to know what to change to. Post-modern culture is no longer modern culture, but what is it and what does the church need to change to? To know where the church is to be, leaders must know where it is and where culture is headed. It is not enough to understand there is a moving target (post-modern culture), but leaders in the church must identify the obstacles that must be overcome and how to overcome them.

C. T. Studd, the pioneer missionary to Africa and founder of the Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade, wrote the following couplet,

⁴⁵ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 8.

⁴⁶ Leonard Sweet, *Aqua Church: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today’s Fluid Culture*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1999), 30.

“Some would live within the sound of Chapel or Church bell.

I would rather run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”⁴⁷

The church will have to identify with culture so much so that it may look different, both inside and outside. The church has always had the mandate to go and make disciples, and Jesus invites the sinner to come to Him. When we go unto the entire world, will we speak a language that post-moderns can understand? When the post-modern enters our sanctuaries will what they see and hear make sense? Church leaders cannot think just because someone walks through the doors of church, the rest is up to God. Saint Augustine was correct when he said: “Without God we cannot; without us, God will not.” The church is always responsible for its part, and the part the church has is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. To share means to communicate in understandable and meaningful ways. The church needs to be in a position of understanding post-modernism again. Issachar people had an understanding of the times, so that they knew what Israel should do. Leaders in the church must constantly learn and unlearn in order to serve as effective disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave us a great example of what we are to be like when He said we needed to be like new wineskins. Church leaders need to be able to flex with the culture, getting into position to communicate with a lost and hurting world.

Health-care futurist, Leland Kaiser, has suggested hospitals without walls, in order to take health care to the people. The church must tear down the walls erected by modern culture so that the post-modern might receive the spiritual health care they so desperately need. Henry Ford’s “Any color, as-long-as-it-is-black” approach is no longer valid. In post-modern culture the thinking is now, one size fits most, not one size fits all. The church cannot continue doing ministry by communicating in a modern culture

⁴⁷ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next*, 62.

language, because nobody is listening. The mission of church leaders is to learn new ways of communicating the Christian faith to the post-modern. “Leadership is the ability to turn on a dime in a new direction. What is new in this new economy is not a speed that does what you have always done except faster. Rather, it is doing faster than ever before things you have never done before.”⁴⁸ So church leaders must not only be innovative in their thinking but fast in their response.

The church will respond to culture only as fast as its leaders, and church leaders only as fast as what they learn. The process can be tedious and time consuming. “It is not by accident that,” according to psychologist Richard Blackman, “pastors are the single most occupationally frustrated group in America.”⁴⁹ Being a post-modern leader is not an easy task because it involves a paradigm shift. There is a general sense among post-moderns that the church is irrelevant and does not speak to their need. Yet at the same time, post-moderns seek an experience with God. Church buildings, church language, liturgy, church music, offerings and ushers seem culturally alien to the post-modern. Yet the church needs to be meeting culture speaking in a language that is understood.

Media, The Common Language

Digital and electronic media is the common language available to the church. It is versatile, comes in various formats, and is accessible to most churches, large and small. Media reaches across the boundaries of age, gender, insiders and outsiders, modern and post-modern culture. Media is the tool that communicates to all peoples. “Electronic

⁴⁸ Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Mañana*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2001) , 87.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 20.

media is a life or death issue for the church because electronic media is the language of the culture.”⁵⁰ God is a creative God who always wants to do new things in the lives of His people. Isaiah declares this as he echoes the word of the Lord: “For I am about to do a brand-new thing. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness for my people to come home. I will create rivers for them in the desert!” (See Is. 43:19).

Throughout God’s redemptive plan He has used media as a common language to communicate His truth. “God has a history of speaking through new media forms, beginning with the Christian church itself. Jesus came on the scene during a major technological shift: the transition from an oral to a written culture.”⁵¹ When the Protestant reformation came, it too used the latest technology; the printing press. Martin Luther used this medium and when he did, he spoke the language of the culture. “The effective congregation of the 21st century will be part of the church that makes use of multimedia. The new reformation will speak the language of the culture and employ the communication technology that shapes the culture.”⁵² Christians were the first to make the transition from writing on a scroll to writing on a codex—what we now call a book. A distinguishing feature of early Methodism was their openness to technological developments. During the industrial age, we saw the advent of the telegraph, the typewriter, and the mimeograph machine. Billy Graham launched a worldwide satellite mission in 1995. Graham believes that the church is at best 20 years behind the times in claiming an electronic culture for Christ.⁵³ A church must come to grips with technology

⁵⁰ Michael Slaughter, *Out On The Edge*, 63.

⁵¹ Leonard Sweet, *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*, 125.

⁵² Michael Slaughter, *Out On The Edge*, 25.

⁵³ Leonard Sweet, *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*, 138.

or live in the death-grip of the past. The church does not have the convenience of allowing a half- century to separate itself from culture. The way the church communicates with culture has to change. Media offers an option to the church and promises to be the common language for the post-modern.

Neil Postman offers a word of caution and argues that the church must resist the negative impact that media might have on culture.⁵⁴ When churches begin to utilize media, they must inter cautiously, because it will require major changes in leadership, what worship looks like, and how ministry is done. Even with this new paradigm shift, “few things could change the church on the other side as much as putting the weight on the future rather than the past.”⁵⁵ For the church to be looking “back to Egypt” all the time is neither helpful nor productive. The church can be described as a living organism. It is made for movement and growth, for reaching out and communicating with the post-modern culture.

To accommodate the use of media, much unlearning needs to take place. In the process of unlearning and then relearning there can be a tendency among some people to confuse core values with cultural practices. The mission of the church has always been to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ, but before that is possible, the right language must be used. Media is the right language for communicating with the post-modern. Humans tend to think in images and not words. According to Leonard Sweet, “Images come as close as human beings will get to a universal language.”⁵⁶ There are two groups

⁵⁴ Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1985). Postman sites the many dangers media has on culture and the need to fight against this onslaught.

⁵⁵ Brian D. McLaren. *The Church on the Other Side*. , 152.

⁵⁶ Leonard Sweet, *Post-modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000) , 86.

within culture today: Those who are word-based and those who are image-driven.⁵⁷

Regardless of age, those who are word-based belong to the modern culture and image-driven people are post-modern in their orientation. Aristotle reminds us that “The mind never thinks without a picture.” The post-modern responds and reacts to life through images. They gather the bulk of their information through images and communicate through images, life becomes image-driven. When media is moved into our churches, a new language is spoken. “Media is not the communication form of a stagnant church. It will cause change and growth. It will jerk your congregation out of their apathy and indifference.”⁵⁸ Media has a way of communicating with the post-modern that words alone could not express. Well chosen media communication move past head knowledge to what John Wesley describes as being “strangely warmed.” These media messages help people recall spiritual truth or in fact be exposed to it for the first time. Media opens doors for understanding. It is the bridge not just between modern and post-modern but in communicating the good news. Media helps people pick up the content so they might experience the gospel. Media is instrumental in telling a story which helps form belief; the story does not dilute belief. Media helps to communicate a message that would otherwise not be understood or misunderstood. Media is an effective tool in communicating with the post-modern. Media is the one common denominator that the emerging church and the emerging culture have in common.

Post-modern culture is not looking to the church for more or new information, the “information highway” i.e. the internet, meets that need. Information is for the domain of computers, but stories told through media that evoke emotion will capture the person’s

⁵⁷ Leonard Sweet. *Post-modern Pilgrims.* , 85ff.

⁵⁸ Len Wilson, *The Wired Church.* , 77.

heart. This person tends to think with their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and through touch. Media engages all the senses as it communicates not so much information as emotion. “The use of media as an informational tool has been incomplete in transforming people into Christ-likeness. Readers may cognitively see or hear the power of Christ’s love, but not be moved to act upon it themselves, because it doesn’t engage their soul and spirit as art does.”⁵⁹ The church has for a long time used media as a means of transferring facts. The emerging culture is looking for experience not data. What the church has offered for decades in the way of media is not communicating. Post-moderns are not satisfied with just any media presentation; it must meet a cultural expectation. Most religious video does a poor job of interpreting the gospel to a media savvy culture. Media that transforms is able to communicate a message that can not be said in any other form. A media-literate communicator (the preacher) is capable of speaking the cultural language with fluency and at the same time sharing the gospel message in a new and creative way.

The common language of media possesses such potential in stirring the post-modern culture. The church has a great opportunity of becoming proactive in an emerging culture that is looking for an experience with God in their search for meaning in life.

Summary

As poet/songwriter Bob Dylan once sang, “The times they are a changing.” A new web page is created every two seconds. Online information doubles every sixty days. A new product is placed on the market every thirty seconds. World knowledge is currently doubling every eighteen months. There has been more new information in the

⁵⁹ Len Wilson. *The Wired Church*. , 21.

last thirty years than in the previous five millennia. Leonard Sweet tells us that, “change is happening so fast, we can’t really imagine the world of our parents, and we can’t really imagine what will be our children’s world.”⁶⁰

Kids view more than five thousand hours of television by the time they are five years old. At age seven, kids will have watched twenty thousand television commercials. Our children’s lives are not only heavily influenced by media, but in the process they have been taught the language of media. The generation born after 1960 is part of a culture that is visually dominated. Two generations have now grown up on mass media culture. The multi-sensory media has now become the new wineskins.

Kalle Lasn in Culture Jam tells us, “Every day, an estimated twelve billion display ads, three million radio commercials, and more than two hundred thousand television commercials are dumped into North America.” Church leaders in particular need to be students of culture and not live in fear of the emerging culture. As students of culture, we need to watch commercials more than programming. The reason is simple; the producers of commercials understand the language of culture. Since we are the attention-deficit generation, we must understand effective media communication. “John Wesley intended to see renewal come to the church and worked self-consciously to achieve it.”⁶¹ There must be a concerted effort in bringing about revival as well. It was George Whitefield who encouraged John Wesley to preach out of doors. Preaching out of doors for Anglican clergy was an unheard of practice. In doing so, Wesley learned new ways of communicating with the six-pack culture of his day.⁶² The post-modern

⁶⁰ Leonard Sweet, *Aqua Church*. , 16.

⁶¹ Howard A. Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1989) , 252.

⁶² Leonard Sweet, *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*. , 63.

leader must always remain Christo-centric no matter the kind of ministry. The post-modern leader's highest mandate in ministry is to help others find Christ in their own lives. Ministry in post-modernism is not presenting propositions and principles but presenting Christ in a way the emerging culture understands.

Why is emerging culture interested in church? This new culture is looking for truth, something to build their lives on, and something that makes sense. "The world comes to church not for second-rate imitations, but for an experience of God, which is only possible if it is something that they can understand."⁶³ People are looking for authenticity; they know their spiritual life is important.

When the new language (media) is introduced, not everyone will be happy. "But a lot of the church's fear of technology is about as perceptive as the Midwest resident's protest of a proposal to locate a biomedical research laboratory within the community. Her complaint? They're trying to bring DNA into my neighborhood!"⁶⁴ Worship that communicates to the unchurched will produce tension in the church, that's a given. Although the church must speak a language that is understood in post-modernism, care must be given in introducing it in the church. There are no limits but there are limitations. Comedian George Carlin emphasizes the importance of a right language, "environmentalists changed their terminology to "rain forests" and "wetlands" because no one would be interested in saving jungles and swamps." Post-moderns communicate more through images and less through the spoken word. This is not to minimize preaching or prayer but media used be used to enhance it. This is why the "Jesus Film"

⁶³ Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital Storytellers*. , 95.

⁶⁴ Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Mañana*. , 54.

has been so popular around the world and has helped in pointing the way to Christ.

Media can effectively be used as the language that leads people to the next revival.

This thesis is all about biblical authenticity and cultural relevance in the emerging worship gathering. There is a vacuum that is developing between the church and most-modern culture that the emerging church is trying to fill. “Too many pastors get A’s in biblical exegesis and D’s in cultural exegesis. We know scripture, but we are out of touch with the times. The end result is a gap between theology and reality.”⁶⁵ It is not so much a generation gap as it is a communication gap. The vacuum created by post-modernity has left church leaders wandering how their church can be relevant to culture and still remain faithful to the gospel.

To contextualize the gospel in a worship gathering means in part, to communicate in a language that is understood by the post-modern culture. Media, that is, projected images, video, and film is the language of the post-modern and is the new wineskin of the emerging church. “As things now stand, many Christians never darken the church’s doorway (or take its efforts seriously) because of tired, dilapidated wineskins. Those who attempt to return to a cutting-edge ministry on the frontline of kingdom advance are seen as selling out to culture.”⁶⁶ Church leaders must always remain biblically sound while striving to be culturally relevant. It is the wineskin that must change, not the wine.

Mainline church attendance is in decline. “Unless mainline churches can transition their worship into more EPIC directions --- Experiential, Participatory, Image-Based, and Communal --- they stand the risk of becoming museum churches, nostalgic

⁶⁵ Mark Batterson, “Got Street Smarts”? *Outreach*, November/December 2006 , 62.

⁶⁶ James Emery White. *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004) , 137-138.

testimonies to a culture that is no more.”⁶⁷ As we continue to move from modernity into post-modernity, new ways of communication must be used to help the worshipper experience God. With the post-modernist rejection of many absolutes, and its relativism, that tend to undercut Christianity, it is critical Church leaders can effectively communicate the gospel.⁶⁸ This project helps to define post-modernity, recognize the issues facing leaders in the emerging Church, and look at how image-driven worship might be used to prepare for revival in the emerging culture.

Chapter two looks at where the Church has been, where it is now, and where it is going. Preparing for revival involves media in worship. Chapter three examines membership of mainline denominations, most of which are declining. This author’s own denomination, (United Methodist), Annual conference, (Nebraska), district, (South Central), and local Church, (Doniphan UMC), are all viewed statistically. Chapter four states the biblical basis for revival. Chapter five looks at several worship styles in order to understand what new paradigms might emerge. Chapter six addresses the issue of change in leadership, and the mandate for new wineskins. Chapter seven envisions what can happen when revival comes. The final chapter concludes that change is ongoing. Whatever culture we live in, church leaders will always be required to contextualize the gospel, and communicating in the language best understood.

⁶⁷ George Barna, and others, *Experience God in Worship*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishers, 2000) , 173.

⁶⁸ Gene Edward Veith. *Post-modern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

REVIVAL AND THE EMERGING CULTURE

Where Has The Church Been

For the past 500 years the modern world has received its information and instruction from the printed word or from those who could read the printed word. The church once held a position of authority and respect in culture, and was seen as a place to get answers about love, relationships, and life in the hereafter. Post-modernity questions what the church declares. We live in a world “in which people now reject truth claims that are expressed in the form of dogma or absolutes.”¹ People of every age and of every culture want truth and desire purpose in life. The post-modern is no different, but remains uncertain of the church’s credibility. “The post-modern world is one in which people are deeply suspicious of institutions, bureaucracies, and hierarchies.”² The church, (God’s people) does not have the corner on all truth, but has access to the truth. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life...” (Jn. 14:6).

The church has been in the business of sharing the Gospel with the next generation for 2,000 years. The message remains the same, but the method must always be changeable.³ There has to be opportunity for creativity, for a freshness that is always accompanied by the Holy Spirit. God uses variety to touch the hearts and minds of

¹ Dave Tomlinson, *The Post Evangelical*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003) , 136.

² Ibid., 136.

³ Leonard Sweet, gen. ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003). For a discussion on the relationship that the church wants with culture. How flexible can the method be and still remain faithful to the message.

individuals with His truth. “The theory is that people will buy Christianity if they don’t have to deal with what the church has traditionally been.”⁴ Ministry to the post-modern will not be identical to any other kind of ministry we have seen before. If ministry is going to look different, that means the modern church will need to know how to communicate with a post-modern culture. “The content of the Apostle Paul’s message was always the same, but it was packaged differently for each audience.”⁵ The modern church, with its traditions and own peculiar language has often waited for the world to approach its own doors. Post-modern culture is not attracted to the church. “We have to learn to speak in the language, thought, experience, and culture of the people with whom we wish to communicate.”⁶ The church must be deeply rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ but also closely related to the culture.

Jesus declared in Matthew 16:18, “On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”⁷ In Isaiah 38:10, the phrase “gates of Sheol” (Hebrew for Hades) refers to death. So our Lord can mean: “The church will never be swallowed up by death.” However in the Old Testament, “gates” equals a place of power and authority. So the phrase, “gates of Hades” probably means, “the very power and authority of Satan.” The church may have some setbacks, but in spite of the emerging culture and its mainly anti-Christian attitudes, the church will continue to communicate the Gospel in relevant ways. “God is looking for sincere people to worship Him.” (Jn. 4:23).

⁴ David F. Wells, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998) , 201. Wells would strongly oppose this idea.

⁵ Chuck Smith Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 175.

⁶ Ibid., 176.

⁷ M. Eugene Boring, contributor. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995) Vol VIII , 345-346.

As human beings, we are creatures of habit. For some, worship must be done in a certain way otherwise it is not worship.⁸ “Worship is the battleground today. Some disagreement may result from theology, but most disagreement is over methods.”⁹ The modern-thinking church has been hesitant to make many changes when it comes to worship style. Truth is never negotiable, but style or method can have variation while the church remains faithful. “Truly, all of us who serve the church want to be faithful and not to be dumbing down the church.”¹⁰ The church can be faithful and at the same time learn and utilize better ways of communicating the gospel. “The church’s worship ought not to be so ‘alien’ that it does not communicate with the culture around it, but at the same time it dare not be so ‘resident’ as to empty the gospel of its transforming power.”¹¹ The modern-thinking church has been effective in engaging culture with the good news. God uses the church to connect with every generation and culture. But when that culture no longer exists and has been replaced by a new one, the church must also make an adjustment. “When you always have performed a task in a particular way and have been effective finding that your efforts and training are no longer useful can leave you immobilized, floundering, and overstocked with lots of answers to questions no one is asking.”¹² Culture is asking relevant questions, but not the ones the church was prepared to answer. Church has to make sense to the post-modern, and in order for it to begin to make sense, it has to be understandable. “The post-modern culture in which we live has a

⁸ Leonard Sweet, gen. ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture*. Michael Horton states that current trends touted as unique and unprecedented have marked declining civilizations (and the churches that follow them) throughout history. The obsession with the modern-post-modern typology only fuels an uncritical embrace of everything currently marketed as important and interesting.

⁹ Elmer Towns, *Putting an End to Worship Wars* (Nashville, TN:Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997) , 52.

¹⁰ Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship For the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995) , 10.

¹¹ Ibid., 293.

¹² Chuck Smith, Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It* , 15.

different language and different ways of doing things.”¹³ The task of the church is to learn the language and understand what is important to the post-modern. This is not as different as to what missionaries would hope to accomplish. Unlike missions, the church has waited for culture to understand the church’s ways. “The fact is that most of the mainline church is in serious deterioration or comatose.”¹⁴ The church has not stayed in touch with culture very well. There is this need to speak to culture. The question may not be so much, “how was it done in the past,” but rather, “what does God want to do now.”

Where Is The Church Now

In the movie *Crocodile Dundee*, Mick Dundee travels from the Australian outback to New York City. After checking into the hotel, he looks around his room. Not having watched television for 20 years, he turns it on, catching the beginning of an “I Love Lucy” episode. Mick responds by saying, “Yep, pretty much the way I remember it.” People visiting many of our churches after a 20-year absence, might respond with a similar comment, “Yep, pretty much the way I remember it.” Culture has moved from modern to post-modern, but a vast number of churches remain in the modern world. “We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society.”¹⁵

This is no easy task for the church to do. It does not mean making changes just for the sake of change. We can not throw caution to the wind. Each change must have purpose, and that purpose is to effectively communicate the good news that Christ came

¹³ Spencer Burke, *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations About God, Community, and Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 165.

¹⁴ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishers, 2000) , 172.

¹⁵ J. I. Packer and Thomas C. Oden, *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004) , 178.

to seek and to save the lost. “The church that commits to improving, adapting and responding to the surrounding culture will be more sustainable than one that pays little attention.”¹⁶ The church is at a critical point in its history. Many congregations are trying to transition from modern to post-modern culture which involves significant change. “People don’t fear change. They fear being changed.”¹⁷ Change never comes easily but the church will need to make changes in their approach to communicate the gospel to the post-modern.

If the church is to fulfill its mandate to go into all the world and make disciples, the church must understand the new culture. Because we live in the post-modern culture, church and unchurched alike, the new way of communicating needs also must take place in the church. “Just as ‘culturally relevant’ does not mean dumping the past, it also does not mean we become hostages to our culture.”¹⁸ It is not a question of either/or but rather both/and. The church is to communicate the eternal and living Word, (Christ) in culturally relevant and contemporary language. Many churches are becoming creative in their interaction with culture without compromising the truth. “The tension remains in knowing what is culturally expendable and what is biblically non-negotiable.”¹⁹ It becomes a matter of checking and rechecking, making sure that the church is being understood while pointing to the author of all life. The church is in serious times. The men of Issachar – were heralded for two things: understanding the times and determining how to live in light of those times (1 Chr. 12). “We must understand the serious nature of

¹⁶ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Digital Storytellers Publishers, 2003) , 217.

¹⁷ Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) , 159.

¹⁸ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers Into the Presence of God*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1995) , 137.

¹⁹ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001) , 62.

our times and live intentionally in light of those times.”²⁰ The church cannot understand the culture nor live intentionally by ignoring post-modernism.

Deep down, people want life to make sense. You can deal with absurdity only in small doses, but nobody wants to live in it. People of every culture need answers that can be applied to their life. “Modernity could not adequately deal with one basic question: ‘Tell me who I am?’”²¹ This is a question which the church can answer. The believer’s total identity is found in Christ Jesus. The church needs to be able to communicate this life-giving truth to a generation who no longer lives in modernity. “The way forward for the Christian faith will be for evangelical Christians to stop shrugging and twitching at the mention of post-modernism, and get on with engaging the culture with God’s timeless message in a critical and thoughtful manner.”²² Many Christians are beginning to think outside the box when it comes to worship style, ministry, and mission. These believers have found themselves on the cutting edge of something fresh and exciting. For churches that are innovative and willing to make changes they will be taken seriously by a post-modern culture that already has their doubts about Christianity and the church. “Every generation must translate the gospel into its unique cultural context.”²³ The post-modern is not looking for some fool-proof argument as to why Christianity is true. They also recognize that reason does not somehow unfold the meaning to life. “Whenever someone in popular culture makes statements that reflect absolute truth or universal values, the post-modern mind immediately wonders what he or she is trying to sell.”²⁴

²⁰ James Emery White, *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004) , 13.

²¹ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World*. , 14.

²² Ibid., 14.

²³ James Emery White, *Serious Times*. , 140.

²⁴ Chuck Smith, Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It* , 74.

The church has to have a point of entry into culture if the two are going to connect. The Bible makes it clear that we are to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. The response of people who have been touched by God's mercy is two-fold: They give thanks, and they tell others. "What post-moderns look for is the people who speak out of their heart, unrehearsed and sincere."²⁵ The church today needs to provide what has always been needed. The post-modern is looking for genuineness, integrity, and openness. "In a culture like ours, a central concern of Christian witness is to strategically scatter its own 'images' (symbols, stories) of faith throughout our community."²⁶ Once again, the church is to be a witness in the world by sharing what God in Christ has done and continues to do and all of this must be shared in a language that is understood by the post-modern culture. Christ came into the world to seek and to save the lost. "Jesus sends us into popular culture the way God sent Him into the world"²⁷ (Mk. 16:15; Jn. 20:21).

Where Will The Church Go

Perhaps more than any other time in church history, the key word is "change." If the church is to go anywhere, the church will need to make changes in the way it communicates in post-modernism. "Churches have clung to modern modes of thought and action, their ways of embodying and enacting the Christian tradition frozen in patterns of high modernity."²⁸ If the church does not change it will only remain in a state of modernity and that is completely foreign to post-modernity. Most local mainline

²⁵ Chuck Smith, Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It* , 114.

²⁶ Ibid., 102.

²⁷ Ibid., 86.

²⁸ Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998) , 28.

churches recognize that change is imperative. “Generally, those most aware of the cultural shift from modernity to post-modernity are people who are not locked into the power structures.”²⁹ Change comes easier when we recognize the church does not belong to any one of us. Although changes in culture are happening, Michael Horton suggests that modern and post-modern are not the only two options.³⁰ The church is the bride of Christ, it belongs to Him. We may speak of “my church” but in reality we simply mean, the church we belong to. The church, the body of believers universal, belongs to Christ. The church is a living organism, always changing, moving, living; not an institution, dead and lifeless. The church is not for our control but remains under the authority of its head, Christ Jesus.

Where is the church headed? It is headed for some changes, and those churches refusing to make any change, are headed for something less desirable. Nightline’s Ted Koppel interviewed a man who had been trapped on an oil rig during a fire. Koppel asked the man how he had the courage to jump from a platform fifteen stories high into water engulfed in flames. The man responded by saying he knew he would fry if he stayed on the platform!”³¹ That is what makes us jump. That is what makes us change. Knowing that the church is fighting a difficult battle with post-modernism and to win a lost generation to Christ, means change is inevitable.

Many in the church are out of touch with the culture. It is not that certain styles or methods are more spiritual, it is just that they were once effective. “Few things could

²⁹ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next, Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000) , 33.

³⁰ Leonard Sweet, gen. ed. *The church in Emerging Culture*. What if both are seen as part of this passing evil age and are relativized by the age to come, which even now is breaking in on a decadent world? (See chapter by Michael Horton).

³¹ Leonard Sweet, *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998) , 134-135.

change the church on the other side as much as putting the weight on the future rather than the past.”³² It is important as the children of God that we remember our past: This in turn helps with our decisions about the future, but it does not dictate the future. Our focus is always to be toward the future, not lamenting that the future can not look like the past. “What we need to learn to do is re-present the faith in ways that touch the imagination and fire the interest of the general public.”³³ This is communicating the same message only using new methods.

Post-modernism is unlike any culture ever encountered by the church. “Ours is the first major civilization to be building itself deliberately and self-consciously without religious foundations.”³⁴ The church dare not assume any presuppositions concerning culture. Post-modern culture is essentially biblically illiterate. Truth is relative which gives license to individuals to pick and choose as to what is relevant. “Morals have floundered because they are based on absolute truth, which few people still accept. Even people who claim to believe the Bible do not have the kind of trust in it that was fairly standard one hundred years ago.”³⁵ The church has a major task before it. This is not the time to retreat from culture but to engage it by bringing the timeless message of hope and salvation to an otherwise unresponsive post-modern culture. “Our churches need to be responsive to their respective environments representing the life of God and the life of the spiritual community in a way that is comprehensible to the culture around it.”³⁶ The

³² Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Post-modern Matrix*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998) , 152.

³³ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002) , 93.

³⁴ David F. Wells, *Losing Our Virtue*. , 26.

³⁵ Chuck Smith, Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It*, 73.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

church is always to take the initiative, and to bring to culture a message that is simply communicated and easily understood.

As the church moves into the new millennium it must stay on course and on task. “Christians should certainly resist the temptation to remain in the security of the ‘Christian ghetto’.”³⁷ Just like Abraham was commanded to a land not yet seen, the mandate of the church is to move forward. “If we can present ourselves to our post-modern neighbors not as an exclusive inner circle of “in the know” finders but rather as seekers ourselves—people on the path, folks who don’t have all the answers but who feel they are genuinely onto something—if we can do that, then the seekers around us will feel a kinship with us and many will join us on the path.”³⁸ Pack your bags pilgrim, it is time to move forward.

The Emerging Church

We live in a post-modern culture. Many churches still do ministry with a modern paradigm. Worship services are designed for modern culture while attended by those living in a post-modern culture. The messages are often “word based” while the congregation is “Image-driven”. In spite of the church’s slow transition from modern to post-modern, a new church is beginning to emerge. “Where the modern age was predominantly either/or, the post-modern world is and/also.”³⁹ Since there is such a distinction between modernity and post-modernity, the emerging church has to learn new models and develop a new style of presenting the gospel. Pete Ward refers to this ability

³⁷ Gene Edward Vieth, Jr., *Post-modern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 210.

³⁸ Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*, 183.

³⁹ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999), 27.

to understand and adapt to this new ministry context as “Liquid Church.” “Liquid church is essential because it takes the present culture seriously and seeks to express the fullness of the Christian gospel within that culture.”⁴⁰ A liquid church is able to move freely in culture, using its flexible state to saturate culture but without losing any of its properties. Michael Horton would issue a word of caution for the church not to abandon what Christians have planted through the ages. Horton further suggests that a preoccupation with relevance is also a form of narrowness.⁴¹

The emerging church is going to look different. Times of corporate worship will not resemble church services of the past five hundred years, or even church ten years ago. Those who are a part of the emerging church will not be cookie cutters of the church folk. Church methods will have an unfamiliar look. Conformity has always been a virtue in modern culture. Making a fetish out of conformity to culture only encourages mediocrity. “Greatness in any way, shape or form is usually accomplished by people who are a little bit different. Albert Einstein was always considered weird. When he went up to receive his Nobel Prize he wore a nice tuxedo but he forgot to wear socks or tie his shoes.”⁴² Those who are a part of the emerging church are also going to seem a little out of step. They are however on the right track, looking for opportunities to share the gospel and to connect people to Christ. The post-modern does not view the modern church as something they are looking for. What is happening with the emerging church is that it is beginning to bridge the gap between modernity and the post-modern culture. It is completely uncharted territory with no previous model. The emerging church is now

⁴⁰ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*, 30.

⁴¹ Leonard Sweet, *The Church in Emerging Culture*, see Michael Horton’s discussion: Are we post-modern? Should we be? 105-138.

⁴² David Mains, *Healing the Dysfunctional Church Family: When Destructive Family Patterns Infiltrate the Body of Christ*. (USA, Canada, England: Victor books, 1992), 59-60.

producing new styles of worship and ministry that can be deciphered by the current culture. “We cannot influence popular culture or speak to its issues, needs, and sins, unless we enter it and observe it.”⁴³ The emerging church is making the first move. The first move was to recognize the church was in trouble and that modern ministry was no longer effective nor affecting culture. “Culture is influencing the church more than the church is influencing the culture.”⁴⁴ For all too long post-modern culture has set the pace for the church. The church has been too much reactive and not nearly enough proactive with culture. The emerging church has determined to do less complaining and more changing so that it might be more suited to influence culture. It is time for the church, not to get over it, but to get ahead of it.

Before conversion, God is working in a person’s life, to draw them to Himself. In theological terms, this is called “prevenient grace.”⁴⁵ In working at building the Kingdom of God, the emerging church continues to strive to communicate the gospel message as clearly as possible in a culturally sensitive manner. “If language apart from experience has no meaning, then only that which somehow connects with the secular person’s experience and knowledge base is going to be intelligible to the Brad’s and Brenda’s of our society.”⁴⁶ The only way this is going to be possible is if the church feels its way around culture, understanding its beliefs and then communicating in a common language. “Spiritual hunger and awareness are on the rise, and the desire to express one’s

⁴³ Chuck Smith, Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It*, 191.

⁴⁴ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*, 10.

⁴⁵ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2005), ¶ 101, 46 Prevenient Grace --- We acknowledge God’s prevenient grace, the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses. This grace prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God’s will, and our “first slight transient conviction” of having sinned against God. God’s grace also awakens in us an earnest longing for deliverance from sin and death and moves us toward repentance and faith.

⁴⁶ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism*, 128.

spiritually is now becoming much more commonplace among emerging generations.”⁴⁷

This means the door for communication has been opened for the emerging church. All of humanity is made in the image of God and so each of us has a spiritual nature. We can now talk about spiritual things and begin relating it to the God who loves us.

“When there are mega shifts in a culture, there tends to be a reconceptualization of the church.”⁴⁸ The emerging church is reinventing its ministry. It is impossible to have a thriving, life-giving ministry to the post-modern while emerged in a completely opposite culture. “As Christians who want to live and love on the other side, we had better get a feel for post-modernity from the inside, because in many ways post-modernity is the other side, and it defines reality for more and more people.”⁴⁹ The emerging church is on the cutting edge with a tremendous opportunity to connect with and evangelize the post-modern. Not one single approach to ministry will work for everyone. The emerging culture offers such diversity that new methods must be developed to share the transforming message.

Communicating Through Media

We are an Image-driven culture. We no longer want to hear the news, we want images to accompany each news event.⁵⁰ We are not interested in information only, but we would like it in story form, preferably with visuals added. Whatever you want to tell me – show me. “The modern world made us text trained, with the book our chief icon.

⁴⁷ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003) , 87.

⁴⁸ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*. , 15.

⁴⁹ Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*. , 159.

⁵⁰ Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1985). The author sees media, (television) as having a negative effect, not just as entertainment but as learning.

The post-modern world needs us to be light-trained, with the screen the chief icon.”⁵¹

There is not one family in the western world that is not affected by media. We are surrounded by images that help to input our decisions. Even in the church, images play a critical role in communicating the message. Media has a profound impact on all of culture, in particular, post-modern culture. How might it be used to benefit the church and further the kingdom of God? Media will only continue to evolve. It is a tool that has become available to the church to communicate with the emerging culture. “Keep in mind, however, that how you communicate God’s timeless message will constantly be changing and, yet, God’s word will not.”⁵² A great way to communicate that message is by using media.

Anytime the church can speak in a language understandable by post-modern culture, a road has been paved to present the gospel. This can be accomplished by the use of media in worship. Although media is not used in many churches, it is familiar. Media is a constant in culture by which the church and unchurched alike can be drawn in. “By using what is familiar to the average listener, you increase your effectiveness and can combat the stereotype of an archaic church too.”⁵³ Media allows the church a voice in the post-modern world that could otherwise be silenced. Culture has witnessed a generation, who are now adults, who have received much of their education and entertainment from television, film and the internet. By media, this generation means images, not necessarily the written word. It has become the way in which the post-modern learns. Images have become the most powerful genre in western culture. “Based on the sheer weight of a lifetime of screen watching, researchers now argue that post-

⁵¹ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 32.

⁵² Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World*, 163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 165.

modern folks' brains actually process information differently.”⁵⁴ People learn in a variety of ways. Forty years ago most high school classrooms had pull down wall maps, charts depicting scientific symbols, globes and an abundance of textbooks. Not so today. Most classrooms have access to VH-1, showing what is happening around the world within the last few hours. DVD's produced only weeks previously, explaining, (that is showing), the latest in genetic research. Learning is no longer linear. Processing for the post-modern follows an avenue of images which in turn helps to create specific conclusions. If the church does not understand this basic means of communicating with culture, how can it connect with an image-driven, emerging church. “Christians must engage contemporary culture if they wish to know how to make the good news of Jesus relevant to people in that culture.”⁵⁵ The post-modern culture can be engaged through media.

The local church that is faithful to Christ and His gospel has everything to gain for the Kingdom of God by learning to communicate through media. “Image-driven” is an expression of the emerging culture. Images have a way of captivating an audience and telling a story in a powerful way. Jesus told stories: the story of a man and his two sons. The first son was asked to work in his dad's vineyard. He said he would, but did not. The second son told his dad no, but later decided he would help out. The images left in the minds of the listeners vividly told them who would be part of the Kingdom of God and who would not be part of the kingdom.⁵⁶ Oral tradition communicated through storytelling is the parallel of images burned on a DVD, each unique to its culture, each communicating with its culture. “God's truth transcends culture; for God's truth to

⁵⁴ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World.* , 164.

⁵⁵ Dave Tomlinson, *The Post Evangelical.* , 19.

⁵⁶ See Matthew 21:28ff.

penetrate today's culture we have only to find ways to bridge the biblical and the post-modern worlds—to speak meaningfully to people where they are.”⁵⁷

There are of course, other ingredients that go into effective communication during corporate worship. But the one specific means of communicating with the post-modern, that can be used effectively during worship, is through media. “Information isn’t enough; presentation matters. Effective or excellent media for this age both engages the mind and the heart.”⁵⁸

Churches seem to fall into one of three conditions when it comes to the emerging culture. (1) They ignore current culture and try to preserve modernity. (2) In order to maintain numbers, the local congregation becomes enmeshed with culture, to the point where boundaries become blurred. (3) The local church makes an honest attempt to understand the emerging culture and then makes an equally honest attempt to communicate with the post-modern, using media as the common language. “The church has always had to confront its culture and to exist in tension with the world. To ignore the culture is to risk irrelevance; to accept the culture uncritically is to risk syncretism and unfaithfulness.”⁵⁹ The church has the option of using media to influence the world for Christ. The church was never intended to have a laissez-faire attitude. To be a good steward of all resources involves using media during worship. “Unprepared institutions in ‘persistent make believe’ can tread water only so long before going under.”⁶⁰

Churches in mainline denominations are in trouble. “Like the Titanic, the modern world

⁵⁷ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World*. , 10.

⁵⁸ Len Wilson, *The Wired Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999) , 21.

⁵⁹ Gene Edward Veith Jr., *Post-modern Times*. , xii.

⁶⁰ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*. , 19.

has taken on water and is sinking fast.”⁶¹ Many believers know that things need to change and that ultimately the church needs revival. What the church can do is prepare by sharing the gospel and that ultimately means using images. Rob Johnston states that Christians now see film as the culture’s dominant storytelling medium because it is where people find their root metaphors, myths, and orientations toward life.⁶² Media has such a profound affect on culture and impacts our thinking and how we live our lives.

Media is this culture’s way of communicating. The emerging culture is Image-driven. “In the modern world, the word was the primary unit of cultural currency. In the post-modern world, the image is the primary unit of cultural currency.”⁶³ The church needs to faithfully handle the message, (the Word of God), bring it to the culture, (post-modernism), by a new method (media). The world needs to hear from the church. Those Christians who weekly set in pews are waiting to hear and see the gospel presented in new and fresh ways. There is no age limit on using media in worship, no gender barriers, nor is there a hindrance because of ethnicity since it is Image-driven. “How many more people might you connect to the Word of God if you did use different methods, maybe even show a scene from a film? A movie scene would be familiar to the vast majority of attendees on any given Sunday.”⁶⁴ For this generation, of this emerging culture, God has provided media as a means of communicating His gospel. By using media in worship, the post-modern sees it as a language that they understand. Media then, helps to prepare the congregation for revival.

⁶¹ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*. , 23.

⁶² Marshall Allen, “Multi(per)plexed”, *Christianity Today*, March 2004 , 65. (Rob Johnston is on the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary and author of *Reel Spiritually*).

⁶³ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*. , 200.

⁶⁴ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World*. , 163.

Preparing For Revival

The old Presbyterian catechism began by identifying “the chief end of man” as that of worshiping God and enjoying Him forever. There is a lack of interest in spiritual matters in the church. Our culture is motivated by a consumer mentality, and the church does not seem far behind. Many calling themselves Christians have become less servants and more self-serving. “North American Christianity has difficulty understanding and living out the gospel because the church has become all too captive to a consumerist mindset that focuses attention on meeting needs, on personal growth, and on personal choice.”⁶⁵ Worldliness is no longer just for the world, it has become prevalent in our churches. Sin surfaces in the church much the same as it does in any community. Far too many addictions, broken relationships, and moral indiscretions have been found in our churches. What was once considered taboo in culture is recognized as legitimate. What culture has now called the norm is beginning to show up in the church. The church has overlooked many things that culture has approved. In response to our exhibition of sin, Jeremiah declares, “we have become a people who do not even know how to blush.”⁶⁶ It is amazing what is sanctioned by Christians in the name of being good Christians. Sunday mornings are consumed not at church but outside the church under the auspices of needing time for ourselves or family time. The pattern is so developed in the church that it is common practice for church families to take the summer off. Intramural and club sports are often scheduled for Sunday. It is a fear of the parent that their child would somehow get behind if they do not participate in this extra game time. They miss Sunday worship for the sake of giving the child maximum benefit. Again, the God who declared

⁶⁵ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed. *The Gospel and Our Culture Series: A Series to Foster the Missional Encounter of the Gospel with North American Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) , 31.

⁶⁶ See Jeremiah 6:15.

His deity and that we should not have any gods before Him, is placed in a distant second in both church and culture. Working with the presupposition that “things have changed,” many Christian families have played into the hands of cultural dominance. The church is weakened and retreats to a more passive role in culture. Instead of leading, many churches have settled for following, instead of being proactive in culture, they are merely reactive. There is a hunkering down, forming powerless islands, instead of declaring, “The gates of hell will not prevail.” No matter how you package sin: sin always takes you further than you want to go, it always keeps you longer than you want to stay, and it always costs you more than you can pay.

The Apostle Paul declares that unity must be a key ingredient in every congregation. Many congregations suffer from disunity. Church members mistrust other members, pastors compete with one another, other denominations are written off as ineffective. Apathy, argumentativeness, disagreement, unwillingness to submit to one another and a spirit of superiority exists, all of which grieves the Spirit of God. “Christian unity is the key to evangelism and cultural renewal.”⁶⁷ The church is in desperate need of revival. All indicators suggest, the church needs a fresh touch from God. “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”⁶⁸ We cry out for God to show up. Could there be a better time?

Revival is needed because the people of God are stuck. The vitality that once characterized their commitment has dwindled to mere religion. “More and more we are going out of our worship centers and sanctuaries without even so much as a mar on our glossy finish! We are going out the same way we came in. We may have an

⁶⁷ Chuck Colson, *How Now Shall We Live*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999) , 291.

⁶⁸ See Psalm 11:3.

entertainment fix, a self-esteem fix, a self-righteousness fix, or a self-help fix, but we have not been changed. Why?”⁶⁹ Many who take time to attend church are not finding worship that really connects. And that may be because they are not looking for the right things. David Wells concludes, “We are interested in satisfaction, not a holy dissatisfaction with all that is wrong.”⁷⁰ There is a need for the Spirit to invade the church, giving God’s people a desire to follow hard after Christ. It will take a sovereign movement of the Holy Spirit to awaken the church and bring revival. “A revival is a time when believers witness an extraordinary work of God enlivening, strengthening, and elevating the spiritual life and vitality already possessed, but which life is now in a state of decline and is feeble, mediocre, and dull in its out workings.”⁷¹ Mainline denominations are all in a state of decline, no longer exhibiting a prominence in culture. In outward appearance they typify a dying institution.

The picture looks bleak for the church of the twenty-first century. It appears not to be sound, but sound asleep. How does the church prepare for revival? What does God expect of His people in opening the doors for the next great awakening?

Prayer

Prayer is a gift from God to the Christian. We have the opportunity to connect with God Himself through prayer, to communicate with the God of the universe, and to know that He cares about the details of our lives. Prayer allows us to work in union with the Heavenly Father to help bring about His will and fulfill His plans. One of the things

⁶⁹ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism*, 52.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Revive Us Again: Your Wakeup Call For Spiritual Renewal*. (Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TW, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, 2001), 21.

that Jesus declared was the church was to be a “house of prayer”.⁷² This would suggest that for anything significant to happen prayer must be a priority. As we pray in agreement with God for revival, we begin to pave the way for God to act. God is sovereign and knows how to bring new life into His church, but he wants our cooperation by praying. “We must take the desire for awakening and begin to pray – quietly and patiently – until revival breaks forth.”⁷³ Prayer is indispensable when it comes to revival.

Do not stop praying. Most Christians at some point in their life have wondered if God was listening, and if He was, would He answer. “Persistence grounded in faith is so important because as Americans we tend to be very event oriented.”⁷⁴ The Apostle Paul charges the believer to keep praying. In the parable of a widow who kept pleading her cause with a certain judge, Jesus taught His followers to “persevere in prayer”, (see Lk. 18:1-8). “God responds not to our repeated asking but to our attitude of confidence, of faith that He will hear us.”⁷⁵ In the process of praying for a particular objective, God begins to mold our heart. Part of the adventure of prayer is the journey itself. As we ask God to send revival to our churches, He begins to awaken us. When we pray for others, He gives us a love for our neighbor. While praying we ask for change in others and as we pray, God changes us. Prayer opens us up to God and makes us desire Him.

The church needs our prayers. Mainline denominations are in decline and in need of revival. Prayer is the key that welcomes the Holy Spirit to come and awaken the church. “American Christians do not have a heart that is thirsting for an experience with

⁷² See Matthew 21:13.

⁷³ Terry Teykl, *Pray the Price: United Methodist United In Prayer*. (Muncie, IN: Prayer Point Press, 1999) , 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 107.

⁷⁵ Sue Curran, *The Praying Church: Principles and Power of Corporate Praying*. (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1995) , 127.

God, eager to express gratitude and praise to Him, and open to His response to their efforts to convey humility, appreciation, acknowledgement of His love and character, and joy in knowing and serving Him.”⁷⁶ That is why the church needs prayer. Many believers have become dull to the things of God. There is no excitement or enthusiasm or anticipation of encountering the Living God. Many Christians need to be reminded that Christianity is a relationship not a religion. That the church was designed to be a living organism not a lifeless organization. In 1 Timothy 2:1ff, the whole church is instructed to pray for everyone, everywhere. Paul commands the Christian in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to “pray without ceasing”. Then in Ephesians 6:18, all Christians are told to pray at all times. Prayer is paramount in the church and in each believer’s life. It is not an option but a mandate. The command to pray runs throughout the New Testament. “The all-inclusive nature of this instruction indicates that prayer shouldn’t be a condiment but the main dish in the church’s diet.”⁷⁷

According to Strong’s Concordance, “supplication” can be translated as “strong prayer.” The church is to engage in this kind of praying. God wants His children to begin praying with an expectation that He will respond to the cries of His people. We are to pray God’s promises back to Him. It is not that God needs to be reminded of what His Word says, but rather it is for our benefit to speak the promise in faith believing God can fulfill what He has said. Supplication searches for the heart of God in what His plans are and how He wants things done. Prayer becomes the work of the kingdom. “Our impact on the world and the vitality of our associations with the Father and fellow believers depend upon the prayer connection – prayer and outreach to the world, worship to the

⁷⁶ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*, 16.

⁷⁷ Ed Silvoso, *Prayer Evangelism: How to Change the Spiritual Climate Over Your Home, Neighborhood and City*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2000), 173.

Lord, and revival to the church.”⁷⁸ Prayer helps to determine the impact the church will have on culture. Everything the church is to be about must be done with prayer. It is not restricted to prayer meetings, prayer vigils, concerts of prayer, or times of corporate prayer in worship. Prayer is an everyday, lifelong encounter with God that creates a yearning for His visit.

Prayerlessness means powerlessness. When a church allows activity to squeeze out prayer, every ministry, every form of outreach, every bible study is destined for failure. The business of the ‘house of prayer’ is to pray. It appears that God has made prayer one of the connections to spiritual health. It is easy to see why prayer, individual and corporate, is essential to revival. John Wesley taught that, “God does nothing except in answer to prayer.” Every great movement by the Spirit was first marked by people praying. “We live in a post-modern culture that not only considers Judeo-Christian principles antiquated, by also hyperactively bombards us with countless things that compete for our attention and siphon off our divine affections.”⁷⁹ We need prayer in our churches, not to save the institution, but to save the lost. Prayer is preparation for revival and building the kingdom of God.

Preaching

Jesus’ ministry had three components: preaching, teaching, and healing. In most mainline denominations, when church is mentioned, preaching or sermon comes to mind. Teaching is often neglected or happens in short series, and healing is usually ignored or non-existent. Preaching usually happens on a Sunday morning when more are in

⁷⁸ Sue Curran, *The Praying Church*, 92.

⁷⁹ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*, 73.

attendance. For many church attendees, preaching qualifies what church is. Preaching tends to be the focus of a worship service with the largest block of time given to the sermon. Oftentimes preaching is described in the negative...too long...too boring...not relevant. For the post-modern, preaching is a verbal overdose. Modernity specialized in left-brain preaching. Twenty-first century preaching, post-modernity, must appeal to both the right and left hemispheres. “Now a preacher has to do amazing things to even catch folk’s attention, let alone really communicate. The film-addicted generation thrives on hyper-reality, in post-modern cultural theory language, and it is serious business.”⁸⁰

To be Image-driven does not necessarily imply entertainment as much as it implies a form of communication. A preacher is a communicator who must realize the language of the congregation. The language of the modern culture is foreign to the post-modern. “Young people are not overly impressed with reason and logic. On the other hand, they love information and have access to tons of it.”⁸¹ To the post-modern, having information presented to them does not create conflict. The problem arises in the way it is communicated. Once again, the post-modern is looking for the language they can understand. “We are now a culture whose information, ideas and epistemology are given form by television, not by the printed word.”⁸² Receiving this information must be deciphered by the post-modern into images that communicate and make sense. Having been given information with the aid of images, the post-modern also wants to experience God. Every message given by every pastor should point the way to the throne of grace – where the real action is. “The whole point of a sermon is to bring forth God as the

⁸⁰ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 151.

⁸¹ Chuck Smith Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It*, 48.

⁸² Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 28.

subject and object of our praise.”⁸³ The church must communicate something important and in ways that the post-modern can understand. What is important is Christ. It is all about Him. “Post-modern preachers don’t ‘write sermons’ – they create experiences.”⁸⁴ These experiences are in part created by story-telling. Jesus often used parables, images, and engaged the other senses. The emerging culture is not looking for “fluff.” The post-modern is looking for a spiritual experience that will be helpful to them. “Many churches who want desperately to attract people to Christ miss the point by offering worship so shallow that not enough of Christ is proclaimed to engender lasting belief.”⁸⁵ Preaching must be honest for the post-modern. They have not come to be entertained nor to sit passively. Being entertained leaves no lasting effect and never touches the innermost part of our being. The post-modern is never passive as they live in an interactive environment.

Although the emerging culture rejects many dogmas, they believe there is truth in the universe and that there is a need to find truth. “What post-modern people tend to reject is not absolute truth, but absolute knowledge.”⁸⁶ They are concerned about how truth is presented. An argument filled with logic does not make something true, it only makes the post-modern suspicious. The approach of the apologist, in this case the preacher, appeals more to the emotional side of the new culture. “If true worship is the response of the whole person to God, then we dare not neglect the emotions.”⁸⁷ There was a time in modernity when the mind far outweighed the emotions. Now intuition

⁸³ Mara J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. , 90.

⁸⁴ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. , 177.

⁸⁵ Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. , 280.

⁸⁶ Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*. , 166.

⁸⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Real Worship: Playground, Battle Ground, or Holy Ground*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) , 23.

seems to be the preference over claims to truth. The truth can not be compromised, only put in new packaging, this is something that the emerging church can unwrap and discover for itself. The post-modern approaches truth unlike those from modern culture and so the sermon must be shared in such a way as to fit within their understanding. “People will yawn at the preaching of the Word of God if we fail to put it in a casing that makes sense.”⁸⁸ The infamous three-point sermon will need to be modified if the post-modern is to get it. This is actually not as post-modern as it might seem. Jesus, Paul, and the gospel writers all modified their presentation style according to the audience without ever altering the proclamation of the truth. The preacher must always be in tune to his/her congregation.

Preaching in pre-modern time emerged from an oral tradition, then moving through modernity as word-based. The problem is, the post-modern is Image-driven. “In response to the post-modern rejection of all authority and reliability, can the church offer believable truth, a coherent story that gives meaning in chaos?”⁸⁹ The answer to the question is emphatically yes! Those ministering in the emerging church are finding that media is helping to tell the story of faith in a meaningful and believable way. It is the way to convey the good news to many post-moderns. “Films and television increasingly explore religious ideas and settings. People are interested in spiritual things, they’re asking spiritual questions, and they are beginning to see that many of their deepest needs are spiritual in nature.”⁹⁰ These same people who are looking for answers are wondering if the church has anything to say. Now when the church does have an opportunity to respond through preaching, media will carry the impact because media is the language

⁸⁸ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. , 129.

⁸⁹ Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. , 38.

⁹⁰ James Emery White, *Serious Times*. , 62.

understood by the post-modern. Instead of being fearful of what is emerging in the culture, the church can now seize opportunities. Media is the culture-speaking dialect, and if the church can communicate using the new language, the church will have the joy of sharing the gospel with the new emerging culture. The church has nothing to fear about culture. It has received its mandate to make disciples. “The culture shift toward post-modernity may provide new opportunities for the Christian message to be preached in an unprecedented fashion.”⁹¹ Media that is used in preaching has become an unprecedented way of sharing the gospel.

Repentance

The prerequisite for blessing always means a turning to God.⁹² The term we use for this act is ‘repentance’. It is our part of the equation. The Lord says, if you, “return to me” then “I will return to you.”⁹³ If God’s people are to experience the Lord’s forgiveness and blessing, they must approach Him with a repentant heart. Revival will come only after Christians seek God, being sorry for their sins and their changing their attitude about sin. When we repent of our sins, God is then free to use us for His glory. “The issue becomes not benefits to be received, but conversion: a change of mind, a change of actions and relationships, and a total reorientation of life.”⁹⁴ Repentance allows God to step in and make all things new.

Repentance is ongoing in every Christian’s life. It is a life-long journey of continually turning away from sin and back to God. As God makes more claims on our

⁹¹ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Post-modern World.* , 16.

⁹² See 2 Ch 7:14.

⁹³ See Zechariah 1:3.

⁹⁴ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed. *The Gospel and our Culture Series.* , 106.

life, He asks us to repent and draw near. “Sanctification means ongoing repentance, a life of turning from sin to serve Jesus Christ in grateful reliance on Him as one’s Lord and Master (Gal. 5:22-25, Rom. 8:4, 13-14).”⁹⁵ Individuals repent but sometimes it is necessary for entire congregations to repent. In the Book of Revelation, John speaks the words of the Lord to seven churches. Five of the seven churches are told to repent. In each of these churches, God was requesting entire congregations to deal with particular sins. The Lord’s intent was that when they repented, He would then be able to send revival. “It must involve a forsaking of sin, a confession of that sin, and a deep desire to reverse the pattern of spiritual declension and apostasy that has begun to typify that ministry, either locally, regionally, or nationally.”⁹⁶ When repentance happens revival is able to come but it must always begin with repentance. “The sin question must always be dealt with first, or the quest for renewal and reviving of life among God’s people will be dead in the water, even before it starts.”⁹⁷

Repentance means doing several things which are linked together. Perhaps the Scripture that is most often quoted when speaking about repentance and revival is found in 2 Chr. 7:14. We know this is specifically for all Christians as 2 Chr. 7:14 is addressed to “my people,” referring to God’s people. And here is what we are to do: humble ourselves, pray, seek God, and turn away or “repent” of our sin. When we have a repentant heart, we will be involved in all four of these actions. Repentance always results in a positive change leaving God the opportunity to do His part. What God is promising is He will hear our sincere prayer and will answer our prayer. He then

⁹⁵ J. I. Packer and Thomas C. Oden, *One Faith*, 100.

⁹⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Revive Us Again*, 230.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

forgives our sin and heals our land. God's reconciliation always results in a complete healing of His creation, of both humans and the land.

Many of God's promises are conditional. When it comes to restoration and revival, we are to first and foremost "repent", and then God is ready to begin the process of enlivening us with His Holy Spirit. Once revival comes, there is a new focus and an emphasis on the Word of God.

When the church declines and there is a lack of interest in spiritual matters, there is a need for revival. When Christians see this need, whether an individual, small group, or a congregation, and genuinely, humble themselves, begin or intensify their praying, seek God and repent or turn away from their sins, they are going to hear from God. "Wesley intended to see renewal come to the church and worked self-consciously to achieve it."⁹⁸ When Christians come before the Lord with repentant hearts, they can also come with an expectation that he is going to meet them, reviving them and healing their land.

The emerging church is preparing the culture for revival. Through the use of media, (projected images, video, and film), the emerging church is attempting to open the door to revival. Worship gatherings that use image-driven worship are communicating in the language of culture. We live in a design world, not just for aesthetics, but for connection. The post-modern culture is image sophisticated. By utilizing images, the emerging church has a platform to communicate the gospel.

A better way of communicating is never enough to reach a culture for Christ. Preaching the gospel is an essential part of revival. For we know that faith comes from

⁹⁸ Howard A. Snyder. *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1989), 252.

hearing and hearing from the word of God.⁹⁹ Prayer, that which brings us immediately before the throne of grace, is the way we invite the Spirit to come and revive us. Revival will necessitate repentance. When we repent, we turn from sin, and start walking toward the Father. Through hearing (preaching), seeking God (prayer), and turning from sin (repentance), the door is open for revival.

Neither modern culture nor post-modern culture is beyond redemption. Christ established His church to be the extension of His ministry on earth. We know that Christ Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.¹⁰⁰ The emerging church's mandate is to make disciples, to clearly present the gospel so that people everywhere, of all ages, gender, and color might respond, and grow in grace.

⁹⁹ See Rom 10:17.

¹⁰⁰ See Lk 19:10.

CHAPTER 3

STATISTICAL RESEARCH

Declination Of The Church

This chapter will reference statistics primarily from the Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. It will also include graphs/charts representing this writer's district in which he serves (South Central) and his current appointment, (Doniphan/Rosedale Parish). Much of this information will be gathered from "The Journal" of the Nebraska Annual Conference and from the District Superintendent's files and Annual Church Conference reports. This statistical information will be used in support of this author's thesis.

Henry Ford defined failure as the opportunity to begin again, more intelligently. The declination of Mainline Protestant churches is now our opportunity to begin more intelligently in communicating the gospel in a language understandable to those in our post-modern culture. "Culture is both good and bad, beautiful and ugly, directive and reflective. Culture is what you grow up in." ¹ The church does not have to fear culture nor should it lose its identity to culture. Either of these courses will result in further decline of the church.

This author is most familiar with the decline in membership and Sunday attendance in the United Methodist Church where he serves as an elder in the Nebraska Annual Conference. The United Methodist Church is representative of most mainline

¹ Efreem Smith and Phil Jackson. *The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting with the Movement Shaping Our Culture*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005) , 101-102.

denominations who are likewise reporting membership loss. United Methodists are ranked third in denominational size behind the Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist churches. What happens to United Methodism is significant to all mainline denominations.

On April 23, 1968 in Dallas, the United Methodist Church came into existence with the merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. With this union, membership of the new United Methodist Church topped at nearly eleven million members.² Less than forty years later, denominational membership has dropped to eight million.³ This accounts for the membership loss of three million United Methodists, that is nearly eight hundred thousand per year, or sixty-five hundred every month, or even more dramatically stated, fifteen hundred each Sunday morning.

A three-million membership loss in less than forty years does not suggest a promising future for the United Methodist Church, apart from revival. The United Methodist Church is currently a dying institutional denomination. “There is one number in our denomination that keeps going up,” observed Michael Coyner, a United Methodist bishop in Indiana and president of his church’s national Board of Discipleship. “It is the percentage of churches that did not receive even one person as a new member by profession of faith.” That number now stands at 43 percent.⁴

From national statistics, this writer will look at numbers reported by the Nebraska Annual Conference.⁵ There are approximately seventy United Methodist annual

² Frank S. Mead. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. (Nashville, TN:Abingdon Press, 1992) , 165.

³ See the *General Minutes of the United Methodist Church* , 2005.

⁴ Denominational News Services, “Methodist See More No-Growth Churches”, *Christian Century*, April 18, 2006., 16.

⁵ See Appendix A , 141.

conferences in the United States and Puerto Rico.⁶ The Nebraska Conference is one of the seventy and comprises the entire state of Nebraska.

In June, 2005, Nebraska Annual Conference met in Omaha, Nebraska. Rev. Wayne Alloway, Sr. Pastor of St. Mark United Methodist Church addressed delegates from the floor of annual conference with the sobering news: “Our annual conference is dying.”⁷ As the chair of the Congregational Development Team, Rev. Alloway presented the following membership report and its significance to the annual conference.

In 1970, the membership of the Nebraska Conference was 148,004 members. On December 1, 2004, the Conference membership stood at 84,337. That’s a loss of 63,667 members. 63,667 members – gone.

We also have 14,012 fewer people in average worship attendance – which is roughly the equivalent of losing our current worship attendance in the Northeast, Northwest, Central, and South Central Districts combined.

Which means: If the current rate of membership loss continues, we will no longer be a viable annual conference by 2015, based on the criteria set forth in our Book of Discipline.⁸

This report to annual conference is indicative to what is being reported in annual conferences across this country. The fate of the United Methodist Church will be decided in the next ten years.⁹

Several issues face the conference. The first issue has to do with the church’s mandate to “go into the world and make disciples,” (see Mt. 28:19). Second will the church be able to effectively communicate the gospel in a discernable language.

First, who are the people in this conference we are to make disciples of:

⁶ See the *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church*, 2005.

⁷ See Appendix D , 144. for the complete transcript.

⁸ See Appendix D , 144.

⁹ See the *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church*, 2005

Nebraska has a population of 1.7 million people. According to a Percept demographic study, approximately 11% of the population already has a United Methodist preference. This translates to roughly 191,000 people, who say they prefer the United Methodist Church.

Now, the membership of the United Methodist Church in Nebraska currently stands at 84,337; in other words, only 44% of the people in Nebraska with a preference for United Methodism are actually members of our churches! This means we have the potential for reaching almost 107,000 people in our communities who already prefer United Methodism to other denominations! And that's not even counting the thousands of people with neither a church affiliation nor a denominational preference.¹⁰

Jesus Himself claimed, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few," (NIV).

The harvest is available and the mandate to "make disciples" is given, but how to communicate. "The church needs to know more about post-modernism than what it can gain from reading the weekly news magazines or hearing a few po-mo [post-modern] shibboleths tossed around carelessly."¹¹ If the church doesn't get a handle on communicating in post-modern culture, our attempt to make disciples will end as a failed program designed for a modern speaking culture. "We can curse culture, ignore it, and hope it goes away, or we can wake up and raise the questions to which people want answers."¹²

The Nebraska Annual Conference is divided into seven districts: Omaha, Lincoln, Northeast, Southeast, Central, Northwest, Southwest, and South Central, to which this author relates to. The South Central District, located in the middle of the state, is dissected by Interstate 80. The district includes three communities of populations between 25-40 thousand. Some of the district's 54 appointments are in growth areas.

¹⁰ See Appendix D , 144

¹¹ Myron B. Penner, ed., *Christianity and the Post-modern Turn: Six Views*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005) , 142.

¹² Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003) , 297.

The five largest churches are either Evangelical Free or Assembly of God. The membership/ attendance graph for the South Central District shows a steady decline.¹³ The temporary spike in 1997 was due to a restructuring of the district. At the district level, there is loss of members and a tapering off of church attendance. At best only 38 percent of members attend on an annual basis. “It may be time to acknowledge the need for changes in the way we articulate and understand the key aspects of faith in order to fulfill the mandate to proclaim the gospel to all creation.”¹⁴ Methodology remains one of the missing ingredients. Method is the way or the language that the gospel is communicated in. “When we listen both to popular culture and the Bible for fresh interpretations that will fit the times in which we live, the light of our witness will not be hidden from the people who need to see it most (Mt. 5:14-16).”¹⁵ This author subscribes to the idea that when the gospel is preached in a language familiar to post-moderns, God is open to send revival. God’s Spirit is still sovereign, as Christians invite Him to come.

The Doniphan United Methodist Church is located in a bedroom community equal distance (10 minutes) from two larger communities. Unlike church membership, attendance has begun, (since 2000) to go up.¹⁶ Images are used throughout the worship service in order to help in the presentation of the Gospel.

The use of images in worship only enhances the worship experience by clarifying what is being communicated. For the seeker, images make the church more inclusive, because it is in a language that is understood, even though by nature the gospel is

¹³ See Appendix B , 142.

¹⁴ Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings.* , 134.

¹⁵ Chuck Smith Jr., *There is a Season: Authentic, Innovative Ministry in Popular Culture.* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 92.

¹⁶ See Appendix C , 143.

exclusive.¹⁷ Language, in whatever form it takes must speak to the people of culture, and in this case, the post-modern culture. “Just as Jesus used common bread and wine in the Last Supper, so we effectively sacramentalize the connection between worship and the world by using popular visual images in our preaching.”¹⁸ The Apostle Paul used whatever means at his disposal in order to make the Gospel clear to the readers.¹⁹ God’s word does not change, but everything else does. “The Revolutionary mind-set is simple: Do whatever it takes to get closer to God and to help others do the same.”²⁰ The operative phrase is; whatever it takes!

Having discussed the present situation of mainline Protestantism and specifically United Methodism, it is not to say that some Protestant denominations are growing. There are now 33,800 Christian denominations, “and the fastest growing are the independents who have no ties whatsoever to historic Christianity.”²¹ For example, Pentecostalism is growing at an amazing rate worldwide. The intent of this chapter is not to present arguments as to why independent churches are growing while mainline congregations are often declining or stagnant. The purpose is to demonstrate that growth is possible in a post-modern culture. At the beginning of the twentieth century Pentecostals numbered less than one million, in 2005 there was six hundred million.

¹⁷ George Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing, 1974) , 249.

¹⁸ Michael G. Bausch, *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*. (Alban Institute, 2002) , V.

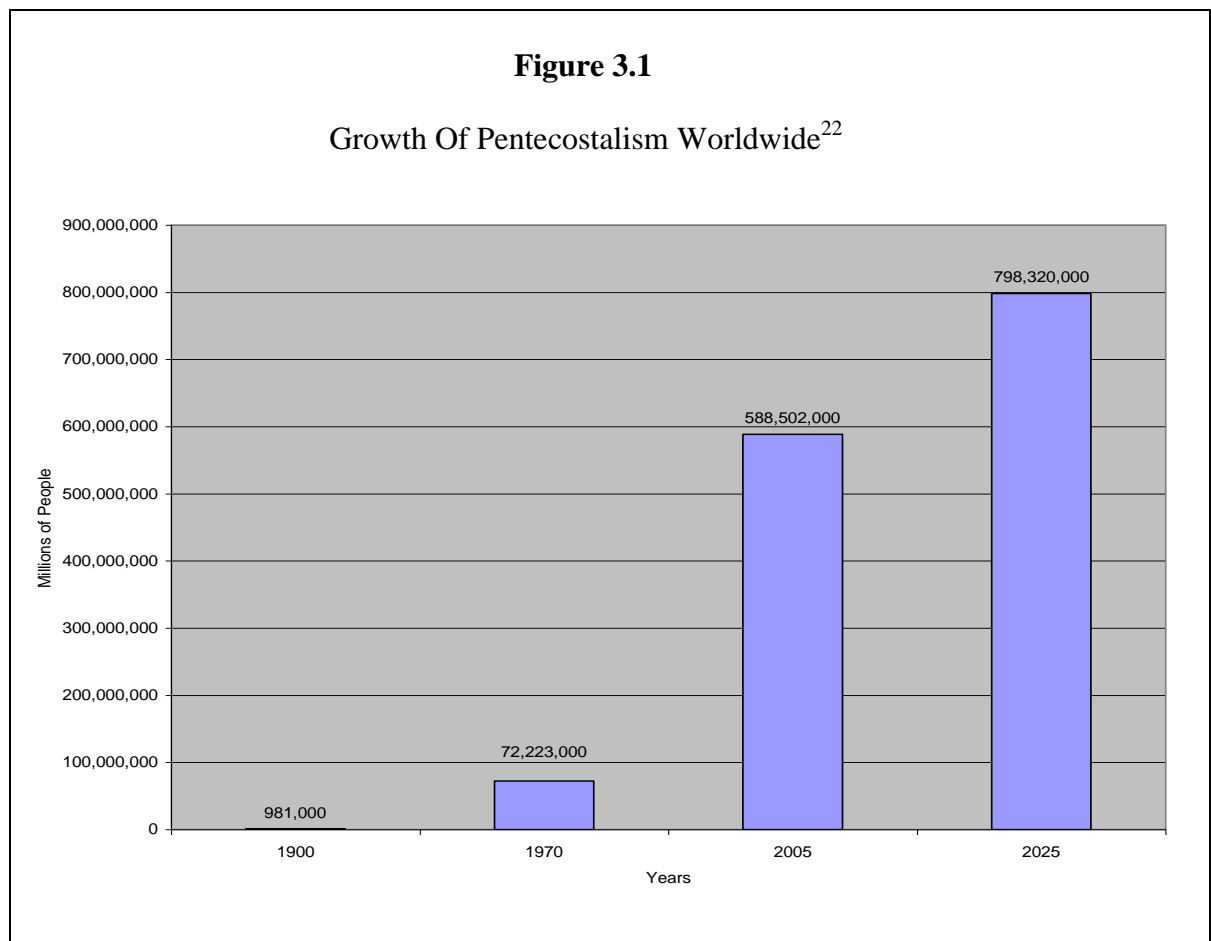
¹⁹ See study notes on Jude vs 9. According to several church fathers, this verse is based on an Apocryphal work called *The Assumption of Moses*. Other NT quotations from, or allusions to, non-Biblical works include Paul’s quotations of Aratus (Ac. 17:28), Menander (1 Co. 15:33) and Epimenides (Ti. 1:12). Such usage in no way suggests that the quotations, or the books from which they were taken, are divinely inspired. It only means that the Biblical author found the quotations to be a helpful confirmation, clarification or illustration. (*The NIV Study Bible*, Gen. Ed. Kenneth Barker, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985) , 1920.

²⁰ George Barna, *Revolution: Worn out on Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005) , 39.

²¹ Kenneth L. Woodward, “The Changing Face of the Church”, *Newsweek*, 16 April 2001 , 49.

Church growth projections suggest that Pentecostalism will approach the one billion mark in the next two decades. The following chart illustrates the phenomenal growth of Protestantism outside of mainline denominations.

There is a spiritual hunger in the world today. The spiritual void in every human being must be filled by God Himself in order for the need to be satisfied. Given the negative attributes found in post-modernism, there is still the need to experience God and His love for humanity.



²² Grant McClung, "Pentecostals: The Sequel," *Christianity Today*, April 6, 2006, 35.

It is sometimes difficult to discern why some churches are in decline, some have experienced some growth, while still others are growing numerically and spiritually at a rapid rate. Because we know that many of God's promises are conditional, God has outlined our part in helping to bring about revival. Ezra, the author of both First and Second Chronicles, describes a kind of "our part...God's part" in 2 Chr. 7:14. The verse begins, "Then if my people who are called by my name...". The introduction of verse 14 is clearly addressing the people of God, those who are trusting in Him for their salvation. Now that the intended hearers are identified, the author states the responsibility of God's people.

They are to: humble themselves

- pray
- seek my (God's) face
- turn from their wicked ways
- God will then: hear from heaven
- forgive their sins
- heal their land

As the church, we are to desire revival. We are to do our part in welcoming God's Spirit by asking Him to come. George Otis, Jr. and his Sentinel Group have studied and documented revivals worldwide. Certain happenings are particular to various revivals. The one common thread that runs through each revival is the fact that individuals "invited God" to come.²³ It is both an Old Testament and New Testament mandate for the people of God to invite God to come and revive them. Even though it is

²³ See Transformation Videos II, *The Glory Spreads*, The Sentinel Group, 2001.

the work of the Holy Spirit to draw men and women to the Father, it is also imperative that as believers we pray for revival.

CHAPTER 4

THE BIBLICAL MANDATE

Reviving The People

Every baseball team could use a player who plays every position perfectly, player who never strikes out, who never makes an error. The problem is, how do you get that player to put down the hot dog and come out of the stands. More precisely, how does the church get the member to get up out of the pew, walk to the front of the church and say, “here I am Lord, I’m yours!” Volunteers are recruited; but disciples are made by the sovereign work of the Spirit of God. We can come to God with a repentant heart, seek Him in prayer with all humility, but it is God who does the reviving of the soul. The prophet was asked, “can these bones become living people again?”¹ The answer for every Christian is yes! God is able to bring revival into all of our lives.

With a continual decline in mainline churches, there is concern as to what needs to be done. John Wesley had a method, (not a program), to everything he did. In United Methodism there is a program for each goal that is set. The unofficial motto might be: “Got a problem? Get a program.” Although this is true in most bureaucratic settings, in revival, a program does not work. By hearing the word of God, praying, seeking God, and humbling ourselves, we have opened ourselves up to a visit from God, but none of this can be programmed. The seven pillars of the church in the book of Acts were, study the Word, worship, prayer, evangelism, edification, care, and mission. It is to this point

¹ See Ezekiel 37:1ff.

the individual needs to be revived. It is living out one's faith and being the church. "A successful church is where people's lives are being transformed and becoming more like Christ."² This is what happens when God enlivens His people.

The Word of God must remain central in all the church does. D. L. Moody, the great evangelist of the 19th century, believed that Bible study was the key to revival. "Let me say right here that if we are going to have...a revival in the Northeast – if we are going to have it, you must bring the people to the study of the Word of God."³ We know that Scripture works in the minds and hearts of people. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right."⁴ "The Word of God, taught by the Spirit of God, renews the believer's mind"⁵

It is incorrect to think of all Christians being modern and all unbelievers being post-modern. Most Christians are also post-modern in the way in which they learn and process information. The emerging culture and consequently the emerging church have become Image-driven. They process ideas via media. The Scriptures are being preached, studied in small groups, or read by the liturgist using media helps in communicating the truth. Media may be used in the way of film clips, dynamation, or Scripture graphics. The truth of the Bible never changes, just the way it is communicated.

Before the modern "word based" culture was the ancient "oral tradition" of the Old Testament. "The Bible is replete with examples of God's prophets – Hosea, Jonah,

² Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1995) , 18.

³ Garth Rosell, ed., *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D. L. Moody*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) , 165.

⁴ See 2 Timothy 3:16.

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe. *Worship: Playground, Battle Ground, or Holy Ground*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) , 32.

and Jeremiah – called to act out or dramatize God’s message to His people.”⁶ Our God, who is a creative God, allows us to partner with Him in presenting the gospel message in a variety of ways. We are responsible for helping bridge cultural and language barriers so that God’s Spirit might work on the heart. “The dynamic of many great movements of God has been the embrace of unconventional methods that connected with the audience in order to present Christ.”⁷ We live in a time in history with great opportunity for presenting the gospel, for communicating the greatest message of the age. “The gospel is about something that happens to us.”⁸ Now the church is faced with the challenge of helping others experience God’s goodness.

Renewing The Church

The church is in trouble. Church attendance seems to be spiraling downward and out of control. Mainline denominations have recognized this trend but as of yet have not been able to reverse it. The Roman Catholic Church has likewise suffered from widespread apathy. One million young Catholics gathered in Cologne, Germany for the 20th World Youth Day. Pope Benedict XVI told participants that in some parts of the world, “there is a strange forgetfulness of God” that has led to a “feeling of frustration, a sense of dissatisfaction” and an “explosion of non-traditional religions.”⁹ Now if this is happening in the Catholic Church, it is also happening in Protestant congregations.

“Christianity in Europe has declined in the face of rising affluence, historic conflicts and

⁶ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001) , 166.

⁷ James Emery White. *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004) , 139.

⁸ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed., *The Gospel and Our Culture Series: A Series to Foster the Missional Encounter of the Gospel with North American Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) , 35.

⁹ Noelle Knox, *Make the Effort for Mass*. (usatoday news, © 2005). <http://usatoday.com/news/world/2005-08-21-pope-germany-x-htm>. (accessed 21 August 2005), revised 22 August 2005.

a widening separation between the secular and religious worlds.”¹⁰ In the Western world it is more of a case of affluence, a widening separation between the secular and religious worlds, plus the impact of post-modern philosophy. “Post-modernity does not look to history for truth.”¹¹ There is only the present that inputs the post-modern. The past is questioned and, since truth can be relative, what you believe now may not make sense next year.

Generation-X comprises those born between 1960-1980. “Generation-X is the first generation of Americans who have entered adulthood with no religious background.”¹² This generation inhabits the post-modern landscape. Generation-X and the following generation, referred to as “millenniums” or “mosaics”, for the most part have little Christian foundation and both question the integrity of religion. “We need to let Generation Xers know it is possible to be in the world, yet not of the world.”¹³ This is something the next generation needs to know as well. One of the more effective ways of helping to inform these generations that Christ is the solid foundation is through the use of media. In the emerging culture, learning takes place more through the arts. The preacher must apply truth, not deliver lectures. “God’s call to Israel to be a holy nation and a priestly people sets the command and historical context out of which the gospel emerges.”¹⁴ This is the direction the people need to be headed in. Sharing this truth must be done so only in a way in which the post-modern will hear it.

¹⁰ Noelle Knox, *Make the Effort for Mass*, (usatoday news, © 2005). <http://usatoday.com/news/world/2005-08-21-pope-germany-x.htm>. (accessed 21 August 2005). revised 22 August 2005.

¹¹ Chuck Smith Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 50.

¹² Ibid., 158.

¹³ Ibid., 167.

¹⁴ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed., *The Gospel and Our Culture Series*, 20.

When a pastor first recognizes there is an emerging culture filled with post-modern thinking and that the church he/she is serving is reaching out to a modern world, panic might hit. It is a bit overwhelming to realize the people are not asking the questions you have been answering. And further they are not learning the same way you do. Everything seems to be changing. Truth can be found in many bumper stickers. One bumper sticker reads: “Everything in the universe is subject to change and everything is on schedule.”

For the church to experience renewal many things will need to change, including leadership, worship, education, and style of ministry. Where do you begin? It is appropriate to begin with leadership as it will take changed leaders to usher in something new. Ministry is a good place to start because this will involve daily contact with both those in the pews and those still thinking about church. Of course overhauling worship is a good choice since it is the one place weekly contact is made with the largest number of people. When a church is in need of renewal, it needs something new everywhere. Wherever renewal begins or if it begins with everything, there is an urgency.

One of the most visible areas of the church for change is the worship time. “A true reformation of worship won’t occur, however, without pain and confrontation.”¹⁵ Reform does not need to become a battle cry and worship the battle field, but reform must happen. “Are we doing whatever it takes to make worship as God-honoring, fresh, culturally accessible, and excellent as it can be? Or does it consistently get the leftovers?”¹⁶ While some hang tightly to the style of their choice, opportunities to reach out and communicate with culture are missed. Renewal means to make everything new.

¹⁵ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishers, 2000) , 134.

¹⁶ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism*. , 42.

Usually when people in the church start thinking about renewal, they think of using a little newer music and believe they are “contemporary.” The word “contemporary” suggests that the music is contemporary to some generation. Nothing is really renewed, only the style of music has been changed. All the tinkering with the existing model of church that’s going on will not save the day. Simply making minor adjustments like replacing pews with more comfortable seating, or singing contemporary pop songs instead of hymns will not reverse the fundamental decline in the fortunes of the Western church.”¹⁷ Because of the church’s decline, it appears that more is needed than merely adopting new methods.

Leadership must be progressive, looking more to the future than to the past. It is not afraid to embrace new ideas and is not threatened by the suggestion. Leadership must declare that God is interested in doing a new work, and that He is asking everyone to join Him. By definition, a leader is a person who leads primarily by example. If a church is to experience renewal, leaders must be willing to be renewed themselves.

Ministry styles will need restructuring. Ministry to the post-modern cannot be limited to the confines of the church campus. “This is our mission – indeed, our great commission: through the church we are to reach out to those relationally divorced from Christ and turn them into fully devoted followers”¹⁸ (Also see Mt. 28:18-20). Reaching out may mean doing it in a new way.

Can a congregation be renewed to any significant degree without people first being revived? Can pastors make lasting changes in church structure that will lead to renewal? Churches and pastors always look for improved ways of doing ministry, of

¹⁷ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission For the Twenty-first Century Church*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003) , 34-35.

¹⁸ James Emery White, *Serious Times*. , 134.

being a better leader, doing evangelism, increasing giving, organizing vibrant youth programs, and learning to preach better sermons. Christian periodicals are filled with conference advertising promoting workshops designed to help renew our churches. It is important for churches to learn to do things better, but if we continue doing only the same things, we will continue getting the same results.

Some churches, in an effort to be relevant to the culture have adopted an all inclusive attitude. “North American Christians have domesticated the Biblical God, worshipping instead a more comfortable deity better suited to our own felt needs.”¹⁹ This leaves the God of the Bible enmeshed with culture. This cannot be viewed as renewal. To sacrifice biblical truth is unacceptable for the Christian.

It seems that it is possible for a declining church to reach a point where renewal is no longer an option. Where the local church would need renewal throughout including leadership, making it impossible for changes to be made. Perhaps at this point the church is in need of something much larger in scope, where the entire churches, including the people are revived. Something so radical, that it is God breathed. It is at this point in time where the hopeful/skeptic says – it is no use, the church is spiraling too fast, change is not possible...unless, the Spirit of God Himself intervenes and brings revival.

Transforming The Community

George Otis Jr. and his organization, The Sentinel Group, have tracked and filmed revivals around the world. One of the criteria used to determine what constitutes

¹⁹ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed., *The Gospel and Our Culture Series*, 32.

true revival is this: did the revival spill over into the community and transform that community? According to a Sentinel Group spokesperson, a movement of the Spirit is watched, but it is not until a community is transformed before the filming starts.

When God's Spirit revives a congregation or a geographic area, it is natural for the surrounding area to be affected. Following the persecution of the church in Jerusalem, Christians left the city and settled throughout Asia Minor. They then shared Christ in their communities. When God's Spirit revives His people, they do not stay in the church.

When Christianity moves outside the church walls and into a community, God begins to change the community. "The traditional method of reaching not-yet-Christians has been to bludgeon them into a recognition of how broken they are."²⁰ Post-moderns are not necessarily affected by that approach. They may feel a need for some kind of spiritual input, but generally they do not feel broken. "The modern 'testimony' often seems contrived to post-modern people. It seems more like a sales pitch for Jesus than an honest account of God's work in a person's life."²¹ What the post-modern is looking for is an experience with God. "George Gallup, in his 1988 study of 'The Unchurched American', recommended as his number-one suggestion that the church stress religious experience over the institutional model of the church by helping people experience God in their everyday lives."²² They do not feel desperate and they do not feel obligated because of a history in the church. As the Christian reaches out into the community to share Christ, it is up to them to find the point of contact with the post-modern. When

²⁰ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 98.

²¹ Spencer Burke, *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations About God, Community, and Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003), 77.

²² Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 112.

revival has taken place within the church, God's Spirit continues to reach people in the community. The church represents a pouring out into the community. This is a style of ministry the post-modern is receptive to. "Post-modern preachers don't populate the pews; they connect people to the Living Christ. Post-modern evangelism doesn't say to the world, 'Come to church'. Rather, it says to the church, 'Go to the world'."²³ When revival comes, communities are transformed.

Awakening The Culture

To awaken culture means that the sovereign work of the Spirit is involved. "The process of redeeming culture begins with the individual, and then moves outwardly in widening spheres of social/cultural influence."²⁴ Revival is always a rippling-out effect, spreading the love of Christ with more and more people. In order to have this impact on culture, every Christian must look at culture through the lens of their worldview. "A worldview is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the 'big picture' that directs our daily decisions and actions."²⁵ The Christian worldview includes the belief that God loved humankind so much that He sent His one and only Son to die for our sins so that the sinner might be redeemed. God then told Christians to go into the world and share this good news. As Christians we are then commanded to impact the culture we live in. "Our task is not to transplant our culture in the name of Christ, but to transform their culture by the power of Christ."²⁶ When God brings revival to the church, the church in turn has a profound impact on the culture. Warren Wiersbe then suggests a

²³ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999) , 53.

²⁴ Charles W. Colson. *How Now Shall We Live*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999) , 293.

²⁵ Ibid., 14.

²⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Real Worship* , 140.

need for balance during worship. “When it comes to planning the church’s worship, the leaders must keep their balance lest they permit culture to destroy the Christian testimony or the Christian faith to destroy the culture.”²⁷

To transform the post-modern culture, people must experience God. They must have a sense within their being that God is real. The post-modern does not want Christianity analyzed ad nauseam; they want an experience with God. “We are producing a generation of spectators, religious onlookers lacking, in many cases, any memory of a true encounter with God, deprived of both the tangible sense of God’s presence and the supernatural relationship their inmost spirits crave.”²⁸ The Christian worldview encourages Christ to be experienced within the culture, and as one experiences Christ, culture is being transformed. “Christianity is anti-religion, not just another religion competing with all other pretenders to the way.”²⁹ For the post-modern to believe that Christ is the only way, they will need to have an encounter with Him. Many post-moderns give equal billing to most religions. “We have to find a way of engaging positively – even transform – our culture without giving in to its anti-Christian influences.”³⁰ The three key statements are: Engage positively; post-moderns respond to dialog. Transform culture, this is being about the Father’s business. Without giving in, the Christian faith is not to be compromised, one does not negotiate truth.

It is clear from the decline of the church and culture’s attitude toward religion, revival is needed. “The church itself is going to have to become more authentic morally, for the greatness of the Gospel is now seen to have become quite trivial and

²⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe. *Real Worship*. , 140.

²⁸ Sally Morgenthaler. *Worship Evangelism*. , 17.

²⁹ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*. , 71.

³⁰ Dave Tomlinson. *The Post Evangelical*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan Publishing, 2003) , 131.

inconsequential in its life.”³¹ If culture sees the Christian church as no different from other religions, they will never be attracted to it. The position of the church has always been to go into all the world and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This includes going into the post-modern culture. “Evangelism takes place in a context, not in a vacuum. The balance between gospel and context must be carefully maintained. We must understand the context in order to address it, but the context must not be allowed to distort the gospel.”³² With the advent of post-modernity, new methods of presenting the gospel will need to be implemented.

The biblical mandate for the church is to work in conjunction with the Spirit of God in reviving the people, renewing the church, transforming our communities and awakening the post-modern culture.³³ “Many Christian scholars argue that the collapse of the modern and the advent of the post-modern age will bode well for a return to orthodox Christianity.”³⁴ The church can remain optimistic as it waits for God’s Spirit to bring revival.

³¹ David Wells, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover It's Moral Vision*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998) , 180.

³² See the *Manila Manifesto*, (1989, part of clause) , c. 10.

³³ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual formation*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993). Many of the same points about spiritual formation are made in terms of how it should be reflected socially.

³⁴ Gene Edward Veith Jr., *Post-modern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994) , 63.

CHAPTER 5

THE WORSHIP GATHERING

What Is Worship

When people think of worship, most often their definition would include: a group of people who get together at 11:00 a.m., on a Sunday morning in a church building, with singing, preaching and prayers. Worship may involve all of the above ingredients but that still may not constitute worship. We can talk about Methodist worship, Presbyterian worship, Lutheran worship, Baptist worship, or Pentecostal worship but that only describes a tradition and not what worship is.¹ Worship is more than a denomination, tradition, or ritual. Worship can happen any time of the day and any day of the week and in any place. Outward signs of worship can be observed but true worship takes place in the heart.

In trying to define worship we end up describing what we can see, mainly because worship takes place in the heart. In true worship, what we witness on the outside is reflective of the spiritual nature going on in the heart between believer and God. Someone once asked the late, great trumpeter Louis Armstrong to define rhythm. He said; “Rhythm is what if you got it you don’t need a definition and if you don’t got it, no definition is any good”. Sometimes that is as close as you can get to defining worship.

This author being a United Methodist clergy person, speaks from that tradition. For the Methodist, the main service is called “The Sunday Service” and the first general

¹ J. G. Davies, ed. See the *New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1972) , 78ff.

direction says “The worship of the church is the offering of praise and prayer in which God’s Word is read and preached, and in its fullness it includes the Lord’s Supper, or Holy Communion.”² In the Book of Discipline, under Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors, we read the following:

1. Word and ecclesial acts:

- a) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.³

With this directive in mind, the pastor is responsible to be the worship leader. It is important to note that not only does the pastor serve as leader but also whom he is serving. “Leaders serve Jesus Christ in the midst of a congregation, instead of serving a congregation.”⁴ Ultimately the Holy Spirit leads our worship by enabling us to worship in ‘spirit and in truth’, the only kind of worship that is acceptable to God.

Although Scripture does not lay out a template of what worship always looks like, we can determine what the ingredients look like by examining Scripture. We begin by asking a series of questions, letting Scripture provide the answers. Did we lift the name of Jesus up and is He the main reason we gather for worship? “Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). Christ’s place is at the very heart of our worship. “And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving

² J. G. Davies, ed. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. , 332.

³ See the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004) , ¶ 340, 1a, 238-239.

⁴ Bill Easum. *Leadership on the Other Side: No Rules, Just Clues*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000) , 158.

thanks through him to God the Father” (Col. 3:17). The way we act should look like Jesus and what we say should sound like Jesus. Christ is the center of our worship and is the purpose for our gathering to worship. “Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever” (Rv. 5:13b).

Did we spend time reading and studying Scripture? “You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God’s way of preparing in us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do” (2 Tm. 3:15-17). Scripture not only gives us direction in life but helps to grow our faith.

Did we pray together? “They all met together continually for prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). There are private prayers but worship is intended to include the corporate prayers of the saints in worship.

Did we celebrate the Lord’s Supper as part of worship? “For this is what the Lord Himself said, and I pass it on to you just as I received it. On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, He took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.” “For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until He comes again” (I Cor. 11:23-

26). Holy Communion is a tangible way of remembering what Christ has done on our behalf and a way we express corporate worship.

During worship, did we yield to the Spirit of God? “But the time is coming and is already here when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship Him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:23-24). Once again, worship is always a matter of the heart.

The worshipping church is also a missional church. Nowhere in Scripture are we taught to be Sunday Christians. We are not just to worship and then go home, because we have a mandate from Jesus Himself. “Jesus came and told His disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:18-20). Authentic worship also involves service. “The vocabulary of worship in the Bible is very extensive, but the essential concept in both the Old and New Testaments is ‘service’.”⁵

Encountering the living God in worship involves a heart experience that carries us into a hurting world with a message of hope and a desire to do everything as unto the Lord, which is also worship. A worship service gives us an opportunity for corporate praise and a foundation to be missional. Worship can further be defined by style. There are a variety of styles within Christian worship that contribute to personal preference.

⁵ J. D. Douglas, organizing ed. *The New Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1962), 1340.

Pre-literate

As different styles of worship are discussed, it is important to note that style in worship is not all moving in the same direction. In pre-literate worship the written word was available only to those who were literate. The pre-literate worshiper was dependent upon clergy who could read scripture. Oral tradition was being replaced by the literate who in turn interpreted scripture and the teaching of the church.

One of Martin Luther's major challenges during the Protestant Reformation was to strip authority from the pope and place it in sola scriptura – Scripture alone.⁶ In the pre-literate world the masses were followers led by government and the church. With the advent of the printing press there is a weakening of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church as well as in the Church of England. The laity now have the opportunity and the expectation to become more participatory. The printed page brought about profound changes in the church and in culture. "Worship is always contextualized so that no one style should be regarded as normative or more spiritual than another."⁷ Moving from pre-literate to modern took centuries, but worship style had begun to shift.

Modern

Modern worship is the outgrowth of the enlightenment. "Modern worship conveys a linear approach to worship with more of an emphasis of left-brain engagement."⁸ We have not completely left modernity, which is primarily word-based,

⁶ Shane Hipps. *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, The Gospel, and Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) , 129.

⁷ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) , 160.

⁸ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000) , 44.

nor have we totally emerged as post-modern, which is image-driven.⁹ Culture might be best defined as and/both rather than either/or. “Children and parents have markedly different tastes, sensibilities, values, and attitudes because they have been raised in different cultures, one at the tail end of modernism and the other at the beginning of the flowering of post-modernism.”¹⁰ What we find is one generation leaning toward modernity because of their experience and another generation leaning toward post-modernity because of their experience.

With the accessibility of the printed word, worship for the modern became word based. There were liturgies for laity to respond to, choirs sang anthems, introits, and doxologies with thirty to forty minute sermons strategically placed in the word-dominant service. As culture became more Image-driven, words for the post-modern have become less important leaving the church holding onto old wineskins.

“The modern era emphasized the confidence that human reason, apart from divine revelation, could know universal truths in all subject matters.”¹¹ The modern period exhibited a brashness that personified the enlightenment. “Enlightenment thinking sought to replace faith in God with human reason.”¹² This same kind of thinking took place with the people of the plains in the land of Babylonia. “They began to talk about construction projects...Let’s build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies – a monument to our greatness” (Gn. 11:3a, 4a). Within modernity a kind of thinking

⁹ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. Worship in the modern era relied more on the printed word. With the advent of post-modernism, worship has incorporated visual images.

¹⁰ Arthur Asa Berger, ed. *The Post-modern Presence: Readings on Post-modernism in American Culture and Society*. (Walnut Creek, London, New Nelhi: Altamira Press 1998) , 13.

¹¹ R. Scott Smith. *Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Post-modernism in the Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005) , 31.

¹² Chuck Smith Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 18.

developed that suggested God might be dead leaving each human being at the center of their own universe.

Church attendance was in a 'golden age' in 1961. Churches were full, with attendance at an all time high. Going to church was considered the right thing to do, even the patriotic thing to do. Families all across America would wake up on a Sunday morning, pile into the family station wagon and attend church together. Even parents who did not attend church were urged to at least send their children. Following a surge in church attendance in the early 1960's, came a steady decline that continues even today, particularly in mainline denominations.

In the modern era, worship services for many seemed slow moving and uneventful. Seeker services emerged in hopes of creating an atmosphere that would attract the boomer and later the buster generations. "The seeker-driven service is planned for unchurched or unsaved people whereas the seeker-sensitive service is designed for the Christian with parts sensitive to the unchurched."¹³ Music shifted from hymns accompanied by organ to praise music and guitar. Sermons became talks and church buildings now resembled auditoriums and theaters. Worship for some in the last few decades of the twentieth century has changed. Many leaders have recognized that worship style must keep pace with culture, while many others continue to maintain a status-quo of style for the Christian church. The question has now become: "If those already on a journey with Christ seem unable to 'get with the church', how will those who have yet to embrace Jesus be able to connect?"¹⁴

¹³ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. (Nashville, TN:Broadman and Holman Publisher, 1997) , 55.

¹⁴ Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003) , 151.

Traditional, Contemporary, Blended

Traditional forms of worship are expressed primarily in the hymnals and books of worship. This style of worship is found in most old mainline churches, and is used to express the Christian faith by following the traditions of the church. It is important to understand the relation between tradition and the church. “The church lives out of tradition, not on tradition. The church builds on traditions; it does not live on tradition.”¹⁵ Tradition in the church is absolutely imperative but always be wary of man-made rules.

In recent history Protestant churches have offered two different worship traditions. One is commonly referred to as “traditional”. In the traditional service laity are expected to follow a written order of worship, usually printed in a bulletin and directed by a clergy person. Hymns are sung from a hymnal, including responsive readings and often praying the Lord’s prayer and reciting one of the creeds. In traditional services there is a minimal amount of body movement other than what is done in unison. Sermons are usually designed for left-brain congregations used to the spoken word. “Churches have clung to modern modes of thought and action, their ways of embodying and enacting the Christian tradition frozen in patterns of high modernity.”¹⁶ The traditional worship service will ultimately fail in communicating the gospel by using a 1950s model of ministry. This is not to say that all parts of traditional worship services are no longer relevant to the culture. As we will discover later, the emerging church looks for meaning within tradition but it must be communicated in a language understood by the post-modern mind.

¹⁵ Leonard Sweet. *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999) , 91.

¹⁶ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. , 28.

Protestants are no longer motivated to choose a local church based on (1) denomination, (2) the church name, and (3) church doctrine. Most churches receive their worship style from the previous generation. “However, lately churches or denominations have been influenced in the way they worship by interdenominational experiences (e.g., Promise Keepers gatherings), services on television, ministers trained in interdenominational seminaries, and various seminars on worship that are trans-denominational.”¹⁷ From this transition of style has emerged the “contemporary” worship gathering. Contemporary worship is a style of worship that focuses on being culturally accessible and relevant to all people. This style often uses innovation in technology for the purpose of communicating the gospel.¹⁸ Many contemporary worship gatherings have done away with the classical hymns and sing praise choruses. “The advantage is they can be easier for a visitor to learn and to understand. The words are usually projected on a screen or at minimum printed without musical notes.”¹⁹ The contemporary service has helped to connect people with Christ. “True worship must facilitate a divine encounter.”²⁰ This is the purpose of all worship regardless of style. To ask which worship style is correct or more spiritual or biblically sound is really to ask the wrong question. There will always be a church filled with people who worship by holding a hymnal and singing century’s old words and listening to a message delivered in lecture format. The contemporary service has changed style with fewer words, (less word based), more upbeat music, different instruments, and with little “high church”

¹⁷ Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1997) , 80.

¹⁸ Tim and Jan Wright, ed. *Contemporary Worship: A Sourcebook for Spirited-Traditional, Praise and Seeker Services*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997) The authors help to show what post-modern worship gatherings look like.

¹⁹ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) , 158.

²⁰ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishers, 2000) , 66.

emphasis. “The cultural changes being introduced by contemporary communication call Christians to find new wineskins for an unchanging wine.”²¹

Clarification needs to be made regarding the word “contemporary.”

Contemporary, when used to refer to a style of worship in the church, only means a newer style at best. “When some churches talk about beginning a contemporary worship experience, they mean “forward into the 1970s”.²² In a contemporary service choruses that are 30-40 years old are sung as compared to hymns that are 300-400 years old. The contemporary service is perhaps a bridge that helps span modernity and post-modernity, or to fill the gap between traditional and what is emerging on the other side. The key in communicating the gospel has to do with the language the people communicate best in. In modernity it is either one way or the other. Post-modernity offers flexibility with a both/and approach that is not contradictory for the post-modern.²³ “Worship is designed not to make people feel good about themselves or to help them become better informed about theology and the Bible but to make them holy.”²⁴ It is never about preference but about communicating the life-saving and life-giving message of the gospel.

A blended style of worship might be considered the mixing of traditional and contemporary within the same worship gathering. The blended service however, is not some mixture composed of 50% traditional and 50% contemporary. The term “blended” suggests that there is no pure division in worship nor is there a specific ratio.

“Contemporary worship emphasizes energy and celebration while traditional reminds us

²¹ Robert Webber. *Planning Blended Worship: The Creative Mixture of Old and New*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998) , 28.

²² Michael Slaughter. *Out On the Edge*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998) , 58.

²³ Leonard Sweet. *SoulTsunami*. , 27ff. A discussion about the Double-Ring Ministries of post-modernism.

²⁴ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next*. , 156.

of our ties with past generations of believers”.²⁵ Blended worship services offer an opportunity to blend the richness of tradition with the contemporary. “To utilize only new worship forms without connections to the past heritage is to isolate only a few years out of the 3,500 year history of the Judeo-Christian tradition.”²⁶ A blended worship service may integrate elements from a high church setting. Ritual can be interwoven with the style of moderate charismatics. The blended service offers impromptu prayer as well as reciting the Lord’s Prayer. There can be the informal moments, liturgies, and collects, candles on the alter, and incense. “This kind of worship service can not be viewed as a compromise between traditional and contemporary but rather as another means to invoke the presence of God. The differences in worship deal with method not principle.”²⁷

Any kind of change is going to be a process and will be difficult for many. Most people in the church will admit, change is good, unless it happens. The more set our routines of life become, the more we resist change.

Multi-sensory

Multi-sensory worship means a total experience. It is the bringing together of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. The key to multi-sensory worship is ‘experience’. Multi-sensory worship is attractive to the post-modern.²⁸ The worship of God is never one dimensional. Scripture instructs us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength (Mk 12:30). If we are to love

²⁵ Tim and Jan Wright, ed., *Contemporary Worship*, 52.

²⁶ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 60.

²⁷ Elmer Towns. *Putting An End to Worship Wars*, 53.

²⁸ Kim Miller. *Handbook For Multi-sensory Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999). This practical help illustrates the way a ‘multi-sensory’ worship gathering is carefully put together.

God for all our worth, we would also want to worship Him with all our senses. Currently our worship services are word based and so we are attentive listeners and readers. “We are now in the midst of another language transition, although usually we do not think of it as such. Our native worship language is expressed in printed words and oral communication, while the new language of the 21st century, which has not quite made it into our worship, is expressed with visual imagery and popular music punctuated with short burst of spoken information.”²⁹ Living in a culture that is no longer word based, but rather image-driven, there is a need to shift to multi-sensory communication. “Cultural transmission consists of the stories, symbols, and images that provide coherence and meaning to a particular community.”³⁰ Communication within post-modernity requires a new skill and an openness to learning new methods. “Our times beg the question, ‘Is the message of Christ being heard, not just preached.’”³¹ The gospel must be made clear and understood by the listener (words) and viewer (images).

Many pastors have been taught that large crowds mean a successful ministry and that the key to success hinges on the right combination of worship style. Traditional, contemporary, blended, high church, low church, and multi-sensory all have to do with communication. “True worship is measured by the transformation of worshipers because they have been in the presence of God.”³² Our goal in designing a worship service is always and foremost to connect people to the God of the universe. The music we sing,

²⁹ Michael G. Bausch. *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*. (Alban Institute, 2002) , 49.

³⁰ Robert Webber. *Planning Blended Worship*. , 23.

³¹ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first Century Listeners*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001) , 9.

³² Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. , 3.

the instruments we play, and the media we show, find their importance in the worship gathering only as God uses them to transform our hearts.

Seeing The Need For Change

In order for anyone to see a need for change, it must first be identified. If there is an issue what is the change that needs to happen. Is a change needed to more effectively communicate the gospel and will a lack of change inhibit the mandate to make disciples.

Author Heath White informs church leaders why change is needed. White suggests that the root of the various reasons to learn about post-modernism is “the culture is changing, and post-modern ideas are driving the change.”³³ Most church leaders understand that culture is changing; we see it in religion, politics, education, and in families. If the church is to continue ministering in culture, it must make changes of its own. “White also observes that “post-modernism as a philosophy is here to stay and that it is the pressing responsibility of church leaders to address it with an attitude of faith and love rather than one of fear and loathing.”³⁴ As the church moves deeper into the twenty-first century there is an urgency to make changes. Many churches are already at a loss as to how to impact culture. According to George Barna, “Our research shows that local churches have virtually no influence in our culture [in] the seven dominant spheres of influence movies, music, television, books, the internet, law, and family.”³⁵ With such a low grade on influencing culture, the church has a lot of work to do. “There are many who would like to think the existing church’s transition into effective ministry in the

³³ Heath White, “ Post-modernism 101, ” *Ministry Today*. July/August 2006 , 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁵ George Barna. *Revolution: Worn Out on Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005) , 118.

emerging culture will involve nothing more than the utilization of some creative new worship styles and ministry methods.”³⁶ This author has experienced that kind of thinking among clergy. The belief is, if we can start a contemporary service and sing praise choruses, the church will grow and the unchurched will be attracted to the worship service. Unfortunately needed changes are not that easy.

The hard work comes from studying culture to find out what the post-modern thinks, and determining how to communicate the truth of the gospel to those in a culture who speak an entirely different language. “With the advent of post-modernity we have an opportunity to reenter public life as a force for good and with new vitality in our message.”³⁷ Can it be done? Culture has changed and continues to change and now the church must change.

Removing Boundaries

Ministry in post-modernity is going to look different than ministry in modernity. It is already evident that culture is pushing boundaries in every area of society, including the church. “Po’ministry (to coin a term for ‘post-modern ministry’) occupies a space where – in the words of Sweet, McClaren, and Haselmayer – boundaries have been replaced by frontiers.”³⁸ It will be critical for church leaders to understand that old boundaries have been negotiated by culture and that leaders in modern culture will need to shift their approach in order to effectively communicate. Many of the old prescribed

³⁶ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2006) , 35.

³⁷ Chuck Smith Jr. *There is a Season: Authentic, Innovative Ministry in Popular Culture*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 92.

³⁸ Carl Raschke. *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Post-modernity*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) , 174.

methods will no longer work. “Above all, post-modernity means the obliteration of boundaries, the confusion of categories.”³⁹ With this in mind, it is easy to see why many presuppositions will look and sound differently when ministering to post moderns. “So evangelism becomes more of a dance, a kind of movement back and forth, in the context of a friendship that is done for the sake of really valuing the person and not merely for the sake of ‘winning’ the person to Christ.”⁴⁰ The post-modern is looking for relationship not religion.

It is difficult for church leaders to use the phrase, “the Bible says,” and to have it received by the post-modern as foundational truth. “The popular book and movie, *The DaVinci Code*, has provided an opportunity for discussions with the post-modern.”⁴¹ As recent as the 1950s and 1960s evangelist Billy Graham could use this phrase as a starting point. Now it only creates skepticism. “Post-modernists are skeptical of any unique claims about God, but they are keenly interested in spirituality.”⁴² The church has been left with an avenue for communication. There is a spiritual need in every person since every person is a spiritual person. This is precisely where church leaders can begin a conversation that leads to Jesus Christ who is ultimately interested in our spiritual welfare. “In a post-institutional world, a theology out of popular culture must be rooted in dialogue and engagement.”⁴³

Post-moderns are looking for answers to their spiritual questions. Post-moderns are also not experiencing or expressing their faith in the same ways that moderns have

³⁹ Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg, ed. *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition amid Modernity and Post modernity*. (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004) , 149.

⁴⁰ R. Scott Smith. *Truth and the Newkind of Christian*. , 65.

⁴¹ Phil Cooke, “Lessons From DaVinci,” *Chrisma and Christian Life*. December 2006 , 68.

⁴² Michael Polock, Gailyn VanRheenen, and Douglas McConnell. *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005) , 117.

⁴³ Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings*. , 74.

done it. The following chart indicates a major shift taking place as boundaries are removed.

Where it was once important to express one's faith corporately on a Sunday morning, the post-modern has shifted to smaller communities, sometimes in the way of house churches or faith based ministries. Since culture overall is Image-driven, media has become an important part of expressing faith. Post-modern Americans are learning new ways "to connect" spiritually. They are looking for an experience and not just a routine. "The disadvantage is that in trying to relate to a generation hungry for an experience of God, the seeker may simply feed on the experience without thinking through the life implications of that encounter."⁴⁴ The experience is to lead a person to a new life, where each believer has become new, (2 Cor 5:17).

<p>Figure 5.1</p> <p>How Americans Experience And Express Their Faith⁴⁵</p> <p>Primary Means of Spiritual Experience and Expression</p>				
	Local Church	Alternative Faith Based Community	Family	Media/Arts Culture
2000	70%	5%	5%	20%
2005	30-35%	30-35%	5%	30-35%

⁴⁴ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next.* , 175

⁴⁵ George Barna. *Revolution.* , 49.

The local church is seen as less important to the post-modern in 2005 as what it was in 2000. There is significant growth toward Alternative Based Community as well as media/arts/culture. Because of these changes, church leaders must now learn new ways of ministry by being creative and still faithful to the truth. “Many once powerful voices have lost their right to speak in the marketplace because of their unwillingness to listen to their audience and change their approaches.”⁴⁶ There are boundaries that must be removed so the gospel might be heard, seen, and responded to.

Designing New Paradigms

With old boundaries being removed, new paradigms need to be designed, Jesus Himself does not teach the details of a new Christian worship practice, but He does articulate for all time the unchanging standard of acceptable worship for all believers – ‘in spirit and in truth’.⁴⁷ Beyond this criteria for what constitutes real worship, Jesus conveys what the kingdom of God is like through stories that draw people into an experience with God. The church also needs to communicate through new paradigms that make the gospel clear and inviting. “Post-modern people view their time as a commodity, and a precious one, so the very thought of ‘wasting’ a Sunday morning with little or no take-home value is repugnant.”⁴⁸ New paradigms must be designed with the post-modern in mind. And in order to do that churches need to have an understanding of the culture they live in. “Missionaries know that they must have a profound

⁴⁶ Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings*. , 73.

⁴⁷ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. , 95.

⁴⁸ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World*. , 59.

understanding of their host culture before planning a strategy to reach the unique people group that exists in the cultural context.”⁴⁹ Ministering in a post-modern culture, churches must learn how to be missional.

New paradigms will be designed in order to communicate with culture as the church reaches out into the world. “When the activities of a church focus inward, the church has exchanged its mission for maintenance.”⁵⁰ When churches focus only on themselves, the mission to reach the lost is obscured and the mandate to make disciples is forgotten. The church can no longer say to culture, you know where we are, join us on Sunday. “Missional churches are not just there on Sunday; they are determined to bring the transformational influence of Jesus Christ into their world every day.”⁵¹ Post-moderns must see that in new designs, the church has their best interest in mind; that there is no us/them mentality but rather encouragement to join others in a life of faith. New Paradigms must be more representative of the ministry of Jesus. “Change” and “new” are the operative words as the church looks to be more effective in pointing lost people to a savior.

The Emerging Worship Gathering

Whenever the word “church” is mentioned, most people think of either a church building or a church service. A church service is usually identified as something that happens on a Sunday morning with three main components; preaching, praying, and singing. In the emerging worship gathering some or all of the ingredients of a “church

⁴⁹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006) , 2.

⁵⁰ Milfred Minatrea. *Shaped by God’s Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004) , XVI.

⁵¹ Milfred Minatrea. *Shaped by God’s Heart*. , 17.

service” may be present but also might be labeled differently. The gathering may be located in a traditional church building, or a storefront, warehouse, or school gymnasium. Although some of this may not be new to modernity, other parts are uniquely post-modern.

“It is important to state that: “There is no single emerging church or post-modern worship style.”⁵² What has come to be known as the “emerging worship gathering” is a mixture from three cultures-modern, post-modern, and that which is bridging the two. Emerging worship style tends to be eclectic. “Worship forms are as diverse as the communication techniques embraced by those who follow God and seek to be shaped by His heart.”⁵³ The emerging worship gathering is attracting those who are looking for something real and not real religious, something spiritual that they can experience. “Emerging culture persons are looking for honest, authentic community dialogue in response to spiritual questions.”⁵⁴ The church is faced with a huge challenge but also a great opportunity. What the emerging culture desires is to experience spirituality within community. They have a need to belong even before believing. This will necessitate the local church and in particular during the worship gathering an intentional discipline of hospitality. People never come looking for a friendly church, they come looking for friends. Those who are “trying out” church must be treated with sensitivity. “In a Christendom culture, to ask all guests and visitors to stand was to pay them a compliment. In a post-Christendom culture, such an invitation is likely to drive people to worship at the altar of St. Mattress and to exhibit greater devotion to Our Lady of the

⁵² Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition*. , 101.

⁵³ Milfred Minatrea. *Shaped by God's Heart*. , 75.

⁵⁴ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition*. , 150.

Pillow.”⁵⁵ The post-modern wants to feel of value among those calling themselves Christian. There is a need to see their spiritual questions as valid and their spiritual opinions of value. “To treat others no more harshly than one treats oneself or wants to treat oneself—is precious to post-moderns.”⁵⁶ The post-modern is looking to the emerging worship gathering as a place to belong.

Cultural transformation means to penetrate culture, not compete with it. The church has its own message for a lost world but it must first penetrate culture in order for the message to be understood and taken seriously. “The job of the church is to offer God true worship, that is, “giving the worth-ship to God that is due Him.”⁵⁷ At the same time worship should be pointing people to experience God, both corporately and privately. “In worship we celebrate the truths of faith in ways that embrace participants in the love of God.”⁵⁸ Worship is not designed to compete with culture nor to somehow match culture with its design.

The church seems to be going through a new “worship awakening.” There is something new happening in the local church with emerging worship leading the way. “In many ways this awakening is unprecedented. To a large extent it has resulted from the growing ethnic and cultural diversity of America as a whole, but it is also the consequence of the reach of new media.”⁵⁹ Once again it is fair to state that thriving in post-modernity involves living in an image-driven culture. Because the post-modern communicates through images, (art, video, film, internet), the church must learn how to

⁵⁵ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*. , 59.

⁵⁶ Brian D. McLaren. *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Post-modern Matrix*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998) , 176.

⁵⁷ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. , 60.

⁵⁸ Marva Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. , 67.

⁵⁹ Carl Raschke. *The Next Generation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Post-modernity*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) , 161.

incorporate the language and its persuasiveness into the worship time. Futurist Alvin Toffler suggests that the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn. Pastors have a lot of work to do as they learn a new language (images), and then how to use it within the context of the worship time.

The emerging worship is reflective of a culture that wants something spiritual, but is not always sure how best to experience it. “Worship will continue to become ancient and high-tech,”⁶⁰ and “worship is moving from an emphasis on music to visualization.”⁶¹ Since people live in the world and are a part of culture, their culture is brought into the worship time. The task of the church and that of the worship leader demands caution as well as courage. Planning worship time in a post-modern culture must always be informed by the notion that the Christian is in this world but not of this world.

The worship of the 21st century is not the traditional worship of the booster (1927-1946), nor the more contemporary worship of the Boomer and early buster (1947-1961), but rather a convergence of worship traditions. This convergence style has been molded by later busters and the millennials (1981-present). These latter two groups are beginning to define what is coming from the emerging church and who are themselves becoming the new leadership. This convergence of style has not, as of yet, been defined. In post-modernity there is a contentment in not labeling what can only be experienced according to one’s own definition. Emerging worship is thought to be more contemporary, but even that suggests a period in the past. “In the emerging culture we would be better to drop the term “contemporary” and move this entry to “F” for Fresh Worship or “I” for

⁶⁰ Bill Easum. *Leadership on the Other Side.* , 193.

⁶¹ Ibid., 196.

intentional worship.”⁶² “Contemporary” in the church usually means at least twenty years ago. The music in post-modern worship often involves old hymns and praise choruses. The hymns, when used, are sung with an upbeat tempo and the words changed, not to give a new meaning but to understand the meaning. Praise choruses, like hymns, all suggest tradition. Some tradition will work for the post-modern if it generates a sense of mysticism. Instrumental music, candles burning, incense, low lights can all help to set the experiential mood for emerging worship. “We now see art being brought into worship, the use of visuals, the practice of ancient disciplines, the design of the gathering being more participatory than passive-spectator.”⁶³ They pick and choose. “Post-modern religion is eclectic.”⁶⁴ The emerging post-seeker-sensitive culture wants to see the arts and to have a sense of mystery during a worship gathering. “Emerging post-Christian generations long to experience a transcendent God during a worship gathering rather than simply learn about Him.”⁶⁵ In emerging worship, images become a catalyst for this experience. “The electronic media is the supreme post-modernist art form, both aesthetically and in its all-pervasive influence.”⁶⁶ The culture in which we live has already done the church’s homework by informing the church which language is common to culture. It is now up to the church to become proficient in the language. “Within our high-tech society, audiovisuals are the waters in which most people swim.”⁶⁷ The visual image is the primary language of our day that draws an entire culture together regardless

⁶² Leonard Sweet and others, *A Is for Abductive: The language of the Emerging Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 76.

⁶³ Dan Kimball. *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 5.

⁶⁴ Chuck Smith Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It* , 67.

⁶⁵ Dan Kimball. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 121.

⁶⁶ Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *Post-modern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994) , 121.

⁶⁷ Graham Johnston. *Preaching to a Post-modern World* , 164.

of age, gender, or class. Post-modernity has captured an entire culture and established media as the primary means of communicating. The image directs our thinking, helps us to know what to shop for, what is acceptable. It informs us, educates us and entertains us. “As nowhere else in the world, Americans have moved far and fast in bringing to a close the age of the slow-moving printed word, and have granted to television sovereignty over all of their institutions.”⁶⁸ The world and its institutions have changed but probably more importantly the language of culture has changed. Institutions are rendered helpless without language. This is precisely why the church, like any other institution is in desperate need of learning the indigenous language, particularly in worship.

A worshiping church must out of necessity use a language that is understood by all the participants. The post-modern wants what they can connect with, what makes sense to them, something they can be a part of. Leonard Sweet calls post-modernity, “an EPIC culture: Experiential, Participatory, Image-driven, Connected.”⁶⁹ Through the images the post-modern feels connected because the language is not foreign. Images invite the people to be a part of something bigger and to experience the reality of God. “Information isn’t enough; presentation matters. Effective or excellent media for this age both engages the mind and the heart.”⁷⁰ The worshippers are not only encouraged to use their minds as they encounter God and His truth but also to take that step of faith, accepting God’s truth for themselves.

⁶⁸ Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1985) , 156.

⁶⁹ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. , 28.

⁷⁰ Len Wilson. *The Wired Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999) , 21.

Unlike the sanctuaries of the 1970s and 1980s, they are not disguised as non-sanctuaries. The post-modern understands the importance of symbols. Worship facilities clearly communicate a sense of spirituality. There are crosses and stain glass, along with large screens, video projectors, and computers generating religious images. Media expressed in worship is not an-add on for the post-modern but rather a carry over from what is experienced in culture. Rob Johnston writes “Christians now recognize that film is the culture’s dominant storytelling medium. It is where people are finding their root metaphors, myths, and orientations toward life.”⁷¹ Jesus told stories. Ordinary, easy to understand life experiences from which were drawn the truth of the gospel. For the post-modern, images are able to convey the meaning of life. The following is an illustration of what worship might look like in an emerging church.

We are invited to come to the table and receive the bread and wine.
Music plays as a beautiful collection of artwork depicting the
Last Supper is projected. Our thoughts are drawn to the greatest
gift of all as we reflect on the artistic interpretation of Holy Communion
by artists and photographers. The technology does not intrude.⁷²

Media is the language of the post-modern. Image-driven worship is what the post-modern understands. What once proved effective in communicating the gospel to a modern culture no longer connects with the post-modern. “Post moderns have fallen in love with the screen the way moderns fell in love with the book. They are post-Gutenberg. It’s the screen that has authority, magic, and soulfulness.”⁷³ This is our culture, and media is the current language of that culture.

⁷¹ Marshall Allen, “Multi (per) plexed,” *Christianity Today*, March 2004 , 65.

⁷² John P Jewell. *Wired For Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) , 140

⁷³ Leonard Sweet. *Summoned to Lead*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) , 132.

Media is the language of culture. With the distribution of films, the availability of satellite television, the internet, and media gallery on cell phones, people around the world are experiencing this new language. Images entertain us, inform us, and educate us, all the while moving us back to the intuitive, right brain world of an oral culture. Every culture now exists in an image-driven world, not just the emerging culture.

The church around the world can not afford to neglect communicating the gospel without image-driven worship. Media is an effective tool in driving the message home, because many listeners are more visual than auditory.⁷⁴ Regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, the familiarity of media in all cultures makes it the common language. Although it is only a tool, media moves the church one step closer to fulfilling it's biblical mandate of preaching the gospel in every part of the world.

⁷⁴ Larry Keefauver. "An Economy of Words," *Ministry Today*, May/June 2005, 12.

CHAPTER 6

CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN A POST-MODERN WORLD

Willing To Change

Culture has changed from modern to post-modern. Church leadership has been slow in making the change needed to lead a post-modern culture. The called pastor wants to remain faithful to his/her call to ministry but is reluctant to make changes that many in the church now resist. And yet each church leader must distinguish between tradition and traditionalism, and between content and context.

“If ministers are not constantly learning and unlearning, they are becoming less and less qualified to serve as effective disciples of Jesus Christ.”¹ Certain changes are inevitable but if the church does not change in its method of communicating the gospel, the culture can remain in darkness. There must be a willingness to change, and to move from the linear methods of the past, to the image-driven language of the new culture.

The church is faced with the reality of changing or forever being trapped in a modern culture with little hope of reaching a post-modern culture for Christ. “It is the two younger generations of Americans—the Baby Busters and the Mosaics—who inject energy into the economy, social institutions, and even the church because they understand and embrace constant change and innovation.”² Not everyone in the church, including some in leadership endorses change. Further change can be seen as selling out to the

¹ Leonard Sweet. *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998) , 49.

² George Barna. *Revolution: Worn Out on Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005) , 42.

culture.³ The church is full of people whose idea of a promising future is in fact, a return to an idealized past that existed somewhere in modernity.

If leadership is not willing to change, the church will certainly lose any ability to communicate with that culture. The more recent past has taught mainline churches that old paradigms of ministry hold only limited success. Leaders need to recognize that doing ministry in a post-modern culture requires a change from how ministry was done in a modern culture. There is no need to continue doing it the same way since the church already knows what the results will be.

The culture has changed and post-modernism has emerged. The church has never been called to mirror culture by being absorbed but to let culture know the hope of the gospel. “In the end, a church can only be called ‘indigenous’ when it reflects its cultural surroundings in such a way that it reaches that community. However, it should not become biblically unfaithful by becoming too familiar to local culture. The indigenous church should be contextualized but not compromised.”⁴ There are many things in the church that can not and should not be changed. Marva Dawn suggests that “changing our worship patterns to attract people to Christ is a mistaken notion.”⁵ The main worship pattern for every Christian church is to keep Christ at the center of worship. It is for His praise and His glory that believers gather corporately in worship. The only means for

³ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997). Some critics to change believe that giving people the style of worship they want corrupts authenticity.

⁴ Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004) , 59.

⁵ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995) , 279.

keeping worship free of idolatries is to keep God the subject.”⁶ With Christ as the focus of our worship, almost everything else can reflect the context.

Helping Others Change

Since we are still in a cultural transition from modern to post-modern, two kinds of leadership are needed - the kind that can communicate within modernity and the kind that can communicate within post-modernity. “While the church as a whole must transition, not every congregation will or should pursue these new directions.”⁷ The operative word is “help” others change. As culture continues its transition it will become more important to embrace the new language of culture—media.

Ministers in modernity geared their ministry to be word driven. Pastors used words, congregations listened. Sermons were analytical, logical, and linear. Prayers were viewed as the responsibility of the clergy, whereas in the early church, prayer was seen as the work of the people.

Church leaders in the emerging church have a formidable task of leading their congregations into new ways of doing ministry. Leonard Sweet asks the question of every leader, “Do you have a lesson plan for unlearning the information that will just stand in your way.”⁸ The major “unlearning” that leaders must prepare for is the way that post-moderns receive information. “Tomorrows churches won’t be built on great oratory. Symbols, images, and art are replacing the talking-head sermon.”⁹ For the post-modern,

⁶ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. , 285.

⁷ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2006) , 32.

⁸ Leonard Sweet. *Summoned to Lead*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004) , 162.

⁹ Bill Easum. *Leadership on the Other Side: No Rules, Just Clues*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000) , 61.

what is visual, communicates a story, it creates emotion and it designs a pathway to experience God. When it comes to the emerging worship gathering, the post-modern functions easily from the right brain, that is, emotive and Image-driven. Images always create emotion and emotion draws the worshipper into the experience. “Charles Finney and the revivalists of his day understood that rhetorical intensity and the aesthetics of worship have a lot more to do with prompting conversion than the forcefulness of apologetics.”¹⁰ For the post-modern the argument of congruity, i.e. when their questions are answered, they can no longer doubt, does not hold true. So crafting a skilled sermon often does not motivate the post-modern to commitment. Those leaders “holding on to a more homogenized worldview express frustration with a generation that seems to hold coherent and paradoxical ideas at the same time, without inner turmoil.”¹¹ Leaders in the church find more success in communicating with the post-modern at the emotional image-driven level. For post-moderns there is no metanarrative that tells one story about the world and the six billion people who live in it. Privatism teaches: “I have my truth; you have your truth; let’s not bother each other with conflicting views.”¹² Because truth is relative to the post-modern, out of necessity image-driven worship has become an important way of communicating the gospel. Leaders in the emerging church must use an abductive method, by seizing people by their imaginations and then move them from where they are to a place where they might gain a new perspective of Christianity. Church leaders can, “use power point and media clips to drive the message home because

¹⁰ Carl Raschke. *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Post-modernity*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) , 175.

¹¹ Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003) , 37.

¹² Leonard Sweet and others, *A Is for Abductive: The language of the Emerging Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 124.

some listeners are more visual than auditory in their learning styles.”¹³ Keeping this in mind, the image-driven worship service communicates well for the post-modern. It is the responsibility of the leaders in the church, who have discovered the language of the post-modern, to help other leaders change and learn the language.

There are guidelines to be followed for every church leader. The following is a vision statement essential for balanced, ministry-centered staff within your own context.

The vision behind this program is to train persons who are equipped to use new technologies in the service of the church. At the same time our intent is that these persons have competence in theological – spiritual reflection in the application of technology in the ministry of the church. The ‘Minister of Technology’ is a person who is competent in technology, grounded in the Christian faith, and committed to the Great Commission by all available means.¹⁴

The main motivation of every church leader is to point others to Jesus Christ. For those who already have that relationship, leaders help believers to grow deeper. “The entire process of providing multimedia worship experiences can result in many levels of growth: spiritual relationship, learning, worship attendance, mission awareness, and membership.”¹⁵ Leaders must change, and they must help other leaders to change.

New Wineskins

In three of the gospels,¹⁶ Jesus declares, “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins” and that “New wine must be stored in new wineskins.”¹⁷ Often when teaching spiritual truths, Jesus would tell a story about familiar examples in life. When

¹³ Larry Keefauver, “An Economy of Words” *Ministry Today*. May/June, 2005 , 12.

¹⁴ John P. Jewell. *Wired For Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church* .(Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004) , 124.

¹⁵ Michael G. Bausch. *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*. (Alban Institute, 2002) , 110.

¹⁶ See Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, and Luke 5:37.

¹⁷ See Matthew 9:17.

reminding his listeners that if they were to put new wine into old wineskins, the wineskins which were already stretched would burst apart by the new fermenting and expanding wine. The vinedressers of Jesus' day knew that was exactly what would happen. Because Jesus had drawn his listeners in with his visual illustration, he was now prepared to teach the spiritual truth and the listeners were prepared to receive it. The newness that Jesus brings can not be confined in old forms. The newness of the gospel of Jesus Christ can not be communicated to the post-modern in the same old models or paradigms. The wine has not changed, but the wineskin must always be flexible and changing. "The medium is not the message: It's the wineskin."¹⁸ To be sure, Jesus declares the wineskin must adapt in order to hold the wine. "It is commonly reported that at least 80 percent of churches have either plateaued or are in serious decline."¹⁹ The implication is, something needs to change, new wine requires new wineskins.

Every facet of ministry will need new wineskins. "New ways of thinking is the mandate – simply cloning other successful models is unlikely to work."²⁰ With all the changes in culture, church leaders must be skilled in creating new paradigms in order to minister to and communicate with the post-modern. New leaders from the emerging church will gain recognition and authority among believers primarily by using new wineskins. "Their role will not be building new institutions to replace the old. Rather, it will be providing guidance in the construction of new hearts and minds that produce a

¹⁸ Michael Slaughter. *Out On the Edge*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998) , 58.

¹⁹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006) , 16-17.

²⁰ Ibid., 28.

thriving church community.”²¹ The idea is not to duplicate what already exists, but do what can only be accomplished with the aid of new wineskins.

Jesus directly tells us that the new wine of the gospel will not work in old wineskins. Old wineskins can not even preserve new wine let alone make it available to others. With this directive in mind, church leaders might appropriately be asked, “If you could start again from scratch, would you do it the same way? No! Then why are you not changing it now?”²² Change is rarely easy for most, but in this case, imperative. The church is a living organism, not an organization. Anything living is always evolving, always using new wineskins.

Changes in the worship service become the most noticeable and perhaps create some of the strongest feelings. Remember that, “The first murder took place between brothers in a disagreement over worship.”²³ In many churches, change is a volatile subject and must be handled with discretion. The Bible does not give us an order of service to follow, but we do know that God is looking for sincere people to worship Him, (See Jn. 4:23). We are also aware that “True worship is always measured by the response of the believer’s heart to God.”²⁴

The second chapter of Acts informs us of four specific actions taking place in the early church during worship. The apostles and other believers all joined together for (1) teaching, (2) fellowship, (3) sharing in the Lord’s Supper, and (4) prayer. As Jesus and His disciples met in the upper room the night he was arrested, we again get a glimpse of worship. Together they celebrated the Passover, (fellowship). Jesus taught them new

²¹ George Barna. *Revolution.* , 106.

²² Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the Twenty-first Century Church.* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003) , 62.

²³ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars.* , 47.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

things (teaching). He introduced the Eucharist (sharing in the Lord's Supper). He gave thanks to the Father (prayer). And they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Again it is not so much as a right pattern as it is a matter of the heart. "For most Americans worship is to satisfy or please them, not to honor or please God."²⁵ And yet God continually looks on the heart.

For most in the church, worship has certain ingredients: a sermon, prayer, singing, communion, and usually a monetary offering. A sermon is generally excepted whether topical or expository. Prayers are long or short, read or free flowing. Communion can be served in cups or taken by intinction. Offerings are at times excepted as the means of paying the bills instead of a means of doing ministry. All of these components are excepted primarily because of tradition. The real issue, which is neither a theological or spiritual issue, has to do with preference of music. That is, does one prefer a traditional or contemporary style of music? When considering which style of music is best to use, it is important to note that, (1) every style is contemporary to a certain period of time, and (2) music is only a preference. "It is terrible naïve to think that music is the main thing that attracts people to worship service."²⁶ What should attract us to corporate worship is an anticipated encounter with the living God. There is no substitute for experiencing God. The root cause of divisions over the style and the format of the worship service may be related to an idolatry of power. "The war between traditionalist and those who advocate contemporary styles often becomes a subtle battle for power instead of a communitarian conversation that could result in a blending of the old and new treasures

²⁵ George Barna and others, *Experience God in Worship*. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishers, 2000) , 15.

²⁶ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down.* , 168

to be found in the Word and in music.”²⁷ Once again, it is the heart that God looks at as we sing. Music style is to be contextualized, understanding it is preference that drives style. Everything we do in worship should help us connect with God. “The church is a community that, in its gathered life, brings the world into the presence of God.”²⁸ Church leaders desire to introduce more people to Jesus Christ and in order to help accomplish this missional goal, the church must be willing to introduce new wineskins. “Most lively churches aim to be attractive to people who might be visiting, so we see the emergence of various strategies for welcoming outsiders.”²⁹ The goal is always to communicate the gospel clearly with the understanding that God is the true audience and what we do in worship is ultimately for Him.

New wineskins will involve a different style to preaching. The pastor will become less preacher and more communicator. “In today’s emerging culture, the role of the preacher really needs to come across much more as a caring shepherd who is on the journey with his flock than as a dispenser of information and knowledge telling people what to do.”³⁰ The post-modern is less accepting of authority and prefers an environment less structured than modernity. “What post-modern people tend to reject is not absolute truth, but absolute knowledge.”³¹ Preaching in the emerging church requires a great deal of skill. Since the congregation no longer accepts absolute knowledge as presented by

²⁷ Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, 52-53.

²⁸ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed. *The Gospel and our Culture Series: A Series to Foster the Missional Encounter of the Gospel with North American Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) , 92.

²⁹ Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002) , 61.

³⁰ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) , 194.

³¹ Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Post-modern Matrix*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998) , 166.

the preacher, they must be drawn in to what the good news is about.³² “For the post-modernist, the question is not: Who is right? Rather, the question becomes: What are the sites of multiple meanings?”³³ The post-modern is not interested in the logic of the Apologist but seeks an experience that is most meaningful to them. Great care must be given so that the arousal of emotions and the worship experience do not become an end in itself and possibly turn narcissistic. In modernity, the sermon was generally presented either deductively or inductively. In the deductive method, the preacher starts with abstract principles and builds toward concrete reality. The sermon begins with doctrine and moves toward application. With the inductive method, the preacher starts with concrete reality and builds toward abstract principles. In the sermon, Scriptures are observed and then doctrines are articulated based on the observations.³⁴ But the post-modern neither starts nor ends with doctrine. They are spiritually hungry and are looking for fulfillment through experience. Preachers must get a feel for post-modernity as it is defining reality for more and more people. As pastor and author Brian McLaren writes about emerging worship preaching, “The preacher becomes the leader of a kind of group meditation, less scholar and more sage, less lecturer and more poet, prophet, and Priest.”³⁵ Even though the style of preaching has adapted to the post-modern listener, “sermons should shape hearers by bringing the transforming Word to nurture the

³² John Stackhouse. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. (Oxford, England: University Press, 2002). Professor of Theology and Culture at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., Stackhouse addresses issues that an apologist faces in a post-modern and pluralistic culture. As a “Humble Apologist”, he is committed to defending the faith, not attacking other religions. This approach tends to be less threatening to the post-modern. It becomes a sharing of one’s story which is acceptable in a pluralistic culture.

³³ Arthur Asa Berger, ed. *The Post-modern Presence: Readings on Post-modernism in American Culture and Society*. (Walnut Creek, London, New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1998) , 146.

³⁴ See Leonard Sweet and others, *A Is for Abductive*.

³⁵ Dan Kimball. *Emerging Worship*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) , 88.

development of their character in the pattern of Christ.”³⁶ Remember, if anyone is in Christ, they have become new, (2 Cor. 5:17).

In the emerging church the Image-driven worship service has become the new wineskin as culture’s new language. “In the modern world, the word was the primary unit of culture currency. In the post-modern world, the image is the primary unit of cultural currency.”³⁷ Image-driven worship does not ignore tradition, but rather it rejuvenates it and then uses it. Images help people understand the content so they might experience the good news within their context. “Using images in worship can aid in the delivery of a message. In addition to the sense of sound, it engages another sense, the sense of sight which then enables the viewer to make different connections with the material.”³⁸ The image is what emotionally helps connect people to the salvation story. There is nothing wrong with emotion in worship, but the real goal of media is to tell the story of God, so that people might experience Him. “Thinking visually can completely transform the way we develop worship. A single image can provide a visual anchor to a theme.”³⁹ The use of media in image-driven worship can be highly important. The use of media can create an interest that is accessible only through “right brain” exposure. However using images during worship does not guarantee a “quid pro quo.” It requires not only a plan, but prayer. “Our age has more regard for the artist than for the orator.”⁴⁰ This would indicate the post-modern has a preference but more importantly, media has become the language of culture. “The world comes to church not for second-rate

³⁶ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down.* , 211.

³⁷ Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999) , 200.

³⁸ John P. Jewell. *Wired For Ministry.* , 115.

³⁹ Michael G. Bausch. *Silver Screen, Sacred Story.* , 63.

⁴⁰ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) , 26.

imitations, but for an experience of God, which is only possible if it is something that they can understand.”⁴¹ The church and its leaders are faced with a great opportunity to share the gospel through media in worship...the new wineskin.

⁴¹ Len Wilson and Jason Moore. *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) , 95.

CHAPTER 7

FRESH BREAD

Preparing For God To Show Up

Every church leader knows that culture has changed and that leadership and how we do ministry must change. “Everything fixed is becoming fluid. If we don’t adapt...we’ll drown.”¹ The consequences of a congregation and its leadership that is opposed to change, is a church that has stagnated or is in decline. Leadership must become proactive in order to prepare for God to show up. How does leadership begin in their preparation? This challenge is met by learning to communicate with the post-modern. “The church, especially in the mainline, has lagged behind in getting on board with opportunities that are available for mission and ministry through the use of new technologies.”² New technology is how the post-modern communicates. The image has become the language of our techno culture. No missionary would consider entering a culture without first knowing how to communicate, which of course means speaking the language. Apologist Francis Schaeffer asked the question, “How should we then live?” in his book by that title.³ “But today’s question is, “How now shall we communicate the gospel?”⁴ Biblical truths can be translated into any language, including the language of the post-modern. Once church leaders discover the importance of using media as the

¹ Leonard Sweet. *Summoned to Lead*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004) , 185.

² John P. Jewell. *Wired For Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004) , 16.

³ Francis A. Schaeffer. *How Should We Then Live? The rise and decline of western thought and culture*. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983).

⁴ Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004) , 134.

language of culture, they can use it to share the gospel and its truth. “The forms of media and technology – regardless of their content – cause profound changes in the church and culture.”⁵ It is imperative that church leaders understand this potential and learn to use it for kingdom purposes.

Post-modernity is something new. It may be a product of modernity, but it is so much unlike it. Where modernity hoped to achieve a grand goal, post-modernity is reaping its failures. “Whether in art, literature, film, ethics, politics, theology, or simply in the association of friends, post-modernism is often associated or equated with a mood or ethos of pessimism (even nihilism), uncertainty, subjective and situational understandings of morality, and local or contextual understandings of truth.”⁶ The post-modern is looking for hope but is not necessarily hopeful. Like all peoples of every culture post-moderns want meaning in their lives. Church leaders must “present the real God in all His fullness and not just a thin layer of generalized spirituality.”⁷ A clear teaching of the Word of God begins to open the door for God to show up. The great revivalist of the 19th century, D. L. Moody, “believed that Bible study was the key to revival.”⁸ Unlike the moderns of Moody’s time, the post-modern does not always accept Scripture as truth, therefore it must be presented in such a way that it is understandable and is received as the ultimate authority. The written word must never be sacrificed or ignored. According to Isaiah the prophet...God’s Word does not return to Him void, (Is. 55:11). Once again, the key is speaking the right language.

⁵ Shane Hips. *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) , 23.

⁶ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2006) , 42.

⁷ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995) , 288.

⁸ Garth Rosell, ed. *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D. L. Moody*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) , 165.

As the church prepares for God to show up and revive His people, worship styles are also changing. The clear implication is that change in worship style is part of the emerging culture transition. We must understand culture in order to understand worship. But, “God must be worshiped as He is revealed in Scripture – adding nothing to Him, taking nothing from Him.”⁹ However, there is a lot of latitude in style. Church leaders must be creative as they prepare for God to show up. The language must be as clear as possible and communicating with media is the universal language. “The mind is made up not of words, but of images. Doubt it? When you dream, what do you dream in: words or images?”¹⁰ It is what every human knows, and how every human communicates.

Now that the post-modern knows you can speak a language they understand, it is time to draw them in further to get them involved. The message is paramount in a worship service. We know that faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, (Rom. 10:17). The apostle Paul tells us that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness,” (2 Tim. 3:16). “Within many Christian groups, we are drifting into syncretism, a mixing of Christian themes with symbols and truths arising from non-Christian world religions, creating new faith traditions altogether much like the biblical Samaritans once did.”¹¹ Our congregations must be taught the Word of God. But because the post-modern communicates best through images, these same biblical truths can be illustrated in media. Having said that, this author uses both images to introduce the written word as well as communicates the gospel in a linear fusion. Church leaders must be aware that, “Gen

⁹ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997) , 44.

¹⁰ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000) , 98.

¹¹ Paul Nixon. *Healing Spiritual Amnesia, Remembering What It Means to Be the Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004) , 29.

Xers comprise a post-literary culture for which sound and image have largely replaced the printed word.”¹² We live in a post-modern world but we have not completely left modernity and perhaps never will. Some will always view technology in the church as a distraction.¹³ The church is to serve Christ but in two different cultures. “This time of cultural transition – like every time of great social change – offers great opportunities for the church.”¹⁴ At this point in church history as in times past, leaders must be able to discern the times and know what to do. “The emerging church movement honestly tries to read the culture in which we find ourselves and to think through the implications of such a reading for our witness, our grasp of theology, our churchmanship, even our self-understanding.”¹⁵ It is no easy task to communicate the gospel in this modern/post-modern culture, but it is absolutely what the church has been called to do. What good is a faith that is active and functional only in church. The world is looking and waiting for the real thing. “Science was assumed to be capable of revealing the whole truth about the universe.”¹⁶ But it did not deliver. What is emerging from culture, does not believe that human reason holds the answers to humanity’s deepest needs. Jesus informed the church that the harvest is ripe, and now the workers must be prepared. It is time for churches to prepare for God to show up.

¹² Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) , 127.

¹³ Marva J. Dawn. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*. When a technological mind-set invades the church, it can be extremely destructive of true worship.

¹⁴ Tim Conder. *The Church in Transition*. , 57.

¹⁵ D. A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and It’s Implications*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) , 45.

¹⁶ Chuck Smith, Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 19.

What Happens When God Shows Up

Revival happens when God shows up. What is spiritually dead, becomes spiritually alive. The hand of the Lord came upon Ezekiel and brought him out in the Spirit of the Lord, to a valley full of dry bones. And the Lord asked the prophet, “can these bones live?” (see Ezek. 37). God answers His own question by putting His life-giving Spirit in His people. A. W. Tozer states that, “Revival would be nothing less than the sudden coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the people and taking their eyes off of themselves and putting their eyes on the Son of God.”¹⁷ When this happens there is a conviction of sin and that sin has distanced us from God. “During revival, the Holy Spirit persuades believers of the holiness, justice, and love of God, and of their need to repent and return to their first love of our Lord.”¹⁸ God revives humanity by the inward working of His Spirit.

Revival creates a desire for God and the presence of His Shekhinah Glory. People begin to come to worship to experience the living God. “Worship is not primarily entertainment or instruction, or a morale booster to enable us to face the demands of the coming week, or an exercise in self-realization.”¹⁹ God is the main focus of worship. Worship is designed to make us holy because God is present. The Greek word “hagios” translates “holy” and literally means to be set apart for God. The believer is set apart to experience God in worship. “The one common denominator in nearly every thriving twenty-first-century church, young and old, is that the believers come together to

¹⁷ A. W. Tozer. *Tozer on Worship and Entertainment*. (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1997) , 92.

¹⁸ Bill Bright. *Preparing for the Coming Revival: How to Lead a Successful Fasting and Prayer Gathering*. (Orlando, FL: New Life Publications, 1995) , 15.

¹⁹ Eddie Gibbs. *Church Next*. , 179.

experience God, not simply to talk about Him or to sing about Him.”²⁰ When God is present – everything else is secondary. “People are not looking for denominational labels, doctrine, or a predetermined name.”²¹ They want to know they can have an impact on others but they are not willing to lend their support to an institution.

The post-modern has exhibited a change from more recent generations. “Spiritual hunger and awareness are on the rise and the desire to express one’s spirituality is now becoming much more commonplace among emerging generations.”²² They desire more of that which is spiritual, but they are not always sure how to go about finding it. When God shows up an awareness of spiritual needs become evident. Because we are all spiritual in nature, there is a part in every human being that only God Himself can fill.

Everything Changes

When revival comes, everything changes. The hardest heart is made tender, repentance occurs, people are changed, churches change, communities are changed, entire cultures reap the benefit of revival. This change only comes when God’s Spirit is poured out upon us in new ways. We pray for revival, but it remains in the timing of a sovereign God.

There are changes in both the temporal and eternal missions of the church. “Our mission has two dimensions – a historic, here-and-now, down-to-earth dimension of changing lives, changing cultures, and changing history, and an eternal, ultimate, transcendent dimension of helping people become the kinds of people who will enjoy

²⁰ Paul Nixon. *Healing Spiritual Amnesia*. , 46.

²¹ Elmer Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. , 10.

²² Dan Kimball. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003) , 87.

God forever beyond this life.”²³ In revival we ourselves are changed and we also act as instruments of change.

What was once liturgical and dull, becomes meaningful and uplifting. When the real thing becomes real, people begin to come to worship with an expectation that they will be meeting God. “They have no use for churches that play religious games, whether those games are worship services that drone on without the presence of God or ministry programs that bear no spiritual fruit.”²⁴ We are reminded through the prophet Haggai: “Build my house, and I will come in all my glory,” (Hag. 1:8).

Images and symbols have become an important part of worship in the emerging church. Both communicate the transcendence of God. For the post-modern images are the language of culture and symbols help to provide the means of understanding God and His redemptive plan for humankind. Symbols have become the key to believing without seeing. “Symbols are to the Christian what a white cane is to a blind person. A mustard seed, a bit of leaven, a fishing net, seeds thrown on four different types of soil – all of these are symbols to help us believe in the invisible Kingdom of God.”²⁵ Jesus consistently used symbols to illustrate spiritual truths. There is a return by the post-modern to what was once common in the oral tradition. “God reveals reality to us in this way, so that Christians have the objective truth given to us by God, even though we ourselves could never get ‘outside’ of language.”²⁶ Language is imperative to

²³ Brian D. McLaren. *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Post-modern Matrix*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2002) , 142.

²⁴ George Barna. *Revolution: Worn Out on Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005) , 13.

²⁵ Chuck Smith Jr. *There is a Season: Authentic, Innovative Ministry in Popular Culture*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 111.

²⁶ R. Scott Smith. *Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Post-modernism in the Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005) , 46.

communication, images and symbols come the closest to a universal language. This is why we forget a name quicker than a face – we are visually oriented.

The church has always used symbols to represent the sacred. The Catholic church has traditionally recognized seven holy sacraments: Holy Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Rite of Marriage while the Protestant church recognizes two sacraments, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. The Jewish faith has long practiced circumcision and Passover as outward symbols of something that takes place inward. The emerging church understands symbols as a means of communicating faith. The phrase "Ancient – Future is popular in progressive church circles because it connotes both innovation and tradition."²⁷ Ancient – Future might be defined not as either/or but as both/and. In traditional setting, a beautiful stained-glass window would be a symbol of the sacred. For the post-modern, an image of a beautiful stained glass window projected onto a screen would be a symbol of the sacred. "Digital culture is not opposed to tradition; it represents it in fresh ways, through new media."²⁸ When designing worship, the question becomes, does it communicate the gospel in a language (symbol) understood? "We live in a world of images that seem more real than the natural world about us."²⁹ The post-modern culture is a culture stimulated by images and symbols.

In the modern world we were text trained. The chief icon for the post-modern is the large screen. Pastors are now required to connect their congregations to the text by "getting them to finish your sentences for you, (if they finish it, it's no longer your

²⁷ Len Wilson and Jason Moore. *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) , 126.

²⁸ Ibid., 79.

²⁹ Kevin Hart. *Post-modernism: A Beginner's Guide*. (Oxford, England: One World Publications, 2004) , 58.

sentence; it's theirs). Musical/consultant Brian Eno says the word "unfinished" is better than "interactive."³⁰ The image is especially helpful in encouraging this kind of ownership. We must always find new ways to place our biblical preaching and God-centered worship in more culturally relevant settings. "When we create a God-centered and culturally appropriate worship service, it helps us to begin the process of seeking God for other changes that also need to come."³¹ God has declared that He is doing new things, for our part we are to be ready for change.

God Is Addictive

For all Methodists, those who come out of the holiness movement, and for this author, John Wesley holds a particularly prominent place in church history. Wesley, the founder of Methodism writes, "In November, 1729, at which time I came to reside at Oxford, your son (Mr. Morgan), my brother, myself, and one more agreed to spend three or four evenings in a week together."³² The purpose of this group, known as the "Holy Club," was to know God at a deeper level. Wesley exhibited an interest in spiritual matters from an early age. His Aldersgate experience marked the beginning of his heart being strangely warmed and a deeper commitment to God that only grew throughout his lifetime. There would come a time in which he could declare himself "homo unius libri, (a man of one book)."³³ When God put His hand on John Wesley, he discovered that God was addictive. The more he had of God, the more he wanted.

³⁰ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. , 74.

³¹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006) , 139.

³² John P. Jewell. *Wired For Ministry*. , 100.

³³ Robert G. Tuttle. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1978) , 58.

There is a spiritual hunger in the post-modern culture. People are looking to be filled with meaning and purpose in life, but they are not always looking in the right place. In the desert outside of Reno, Nevada is a place called Black Rock Desert. Large crowds gather to watch “Burning Man,” in hopes of a spiritual experience. Author Naomi Schaefer Riley writes concerning college students. “Obviously students long for something. Otherwise, why all the caffeine, alcohol, and psychotropic medications? Indeed, a recent UCLA survey on spirituality in higher education found 75 percent of undergraduates were searching for meaning or purpose in life, while 78 percent discuss religion and spirituality with their friends.”³⁴ Those from modernity are open to having conversations about spirituality and are genuinely looking for answers.

The emerging church offers what many post-moderns are searching for. “True worshipers want renewal but not novelty, personal enrichment but not at the expense of corporate blessing, tradition but not empty ritualism, and objective truth that helps to produce a satisfying subjective experience.”³⁵ The post-modern, as persons of every generation and culture are searching for exactly what John Wesley found to be true. “The gospel offers the opportunity to be drawn into something larger than ourselves – into God’s overflowing love that moves out in every widening circles embracing the whole of creation.”³⁶ In the process, Wesley also discovered that God is addictive.

³⁴ Naomi Schafer Riley. *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation are Changing America*. (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2005) , 3.

³⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe. *Real Worship: Playground, Battle Ground or Holy Ground*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) , 109.

³⁶ Lois Y. Barrett, gen. ed. *The Gospel and our Culture Series: A Series to Foster the Missional Encounter of the Gospel with North American Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) , 34.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION...BUT NOT THE END

An Ongoing Change

The church must now learn to transition its ministries from a modern world to a culture embracing post-modernity. “Christianity is now culturally as well as socially and religiously disestablished.”¹ With the continual loss of membership in mainline denominations, “the percentage of Christians in the United States population dropped 9 percent from 1990 to 2001,”² it is obvious the church no longer commands a voice in Western culture. “Even though we do not claim America was ever a truly ‘Christian nation,’ she is not now as Christian in attitudes as she used to be.”³ The local church now appears among entities that have very little influence in the post-modern world.

The more exposure that Christians have to post-modern culture—in the work place, television, movies, magazines, the internet—the more we recognize the impact of culture. It becomes critical for church leaders to seek to be sensitive to the hopes and fears, dreams and desires, of both non-churched people as well as people in the pew. This can only be accomplished by understanding and speaking the language of the post-modern. “When missionaries enter a new culture, they have to make adjustments to

¹ Leonard Sweet. *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999), 45.

² Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 8.

³ Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer. *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004), 153.

embrace the language, manners and customs of the culture.”⁴ Leaders in the local church are faced with the same task; learn how to effectively communicate with the emerging culture.

Every missionary and every missional church recognizes that cultural barriers exist. Donald McGavran, the father of the church growth movement listed several barriers in communicating the gospel:

Figure 8.1

Barriers To Church Growth⁵

E-0 Evangelism of those in the church

E-1 Stained glass barrier; evangelizing those outside the church

E-2 Cultural and class barriers; evangelizing those of a different culture

E-3 Linguistic barriers; evangelizing those of a different language

Communicating the gospel in all four of these categories can be accomplished through image-driven worship. Each barrier is negotiated simply by communicating in the language of the culture but by never compromising the truth. Whatever the worship style and the accompanying spiritual gift, media represents the language of the post-modern.

⁴ Chuch Smith Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001) , 156.

⁵ See Donald McGavran. *The Bridges of God*. (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1955).

Figure 8.2

Worship Styles/Spiritual Gifts⁶

1. Evangelistic/evangelism and prophecy
2. Bible/expositional teaching
3. Renewal/exhortation
4. Body Life/mercy showing
5. Liturgical/helps
6. Congregational/gift of administration

Church leaders have this opportunity to lead their churches in ‘Image-driven worship’.

With modernism on the way out, “many supposedly conservative churches now alter not only their style but their message in an attempt to appeal to contemporary society.”⁷

Caution is to be exercised that the message of the gospel not be changed. We cannot adopt the gospel to culture.

Few of our daily experiences are outside the influence of media. Both church and non-church people are mindful of the importance of media in our daily life.

George Barna reports: Among the most overt effects on church life have been applications such as the widespread embrace of large-screen projection systems for worship and teaching events; the use of video technology for multisite ministry; satellite delivery for ministry training; the ubiquity of religious conversation in the media (including the internet); congregations’ reliance on web sites for disseminating ministry information; the use of computers, the Internet,

⁶ Elmer L. Towns. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997) , 38-39.

⁷ Gene Edward Vieth. *Post-modern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994) , 210.

and e-mail for gathering facts that are woven into religious teaching; the enhanced visual design evident in church publications and presentations; and the superior musical experiences provided through the use of down-loadable files and performances using ‘smart’ instruments.⁸

The diversity found among emerging churches precludes generalizing. Some churches will use technology successfully and to its fullest. Successful application will require the same commitment as other ministries in the church. Effective media must be bilingual in that it must be able to communicate with those within the church and with those not yet part of the church. “A biblical church is a contextual church.”⁹ Our mandate is to seek to understand and reach people in culture.

In the absence of any external authority, the line between right and wrong gets blurred. “There is a great hope for this generation because life without boundaries often leads back home,”¹⁰ (see also Lk 15:17-20). The Image-driven worship service helps to point the way. Congregations of all sizes can move toward “image-driven” worship. To get started, the typical system will run \$3,000-\$7,000. This would include a computer, monitor, (no printer needed), a video projector and a VHS/DVD player. Licensing for music, (CCLI) and videos, (CVLI and MPLC) is based on average attendance.¹¹ This is an important step every church needs to work within the law. Many images can be accessed free, others are a subscription rate. One of the best ways of educating yourself is to find out which churches in your area use media, and then ask questions of their leaders. Most congregations have individuals who understand

⁸ George Barna. *Revolution: Worn Out On Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005) , 44-45.

⁹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code.* , 180.

¹⁰ Chuck Smith Jr. *The End of the World As We Know It.* , 160.

¹¹ Licensing for both music and video use in the local church can be obtained from the following web sites. CVLI (Christian Video Licensing International) www.cvli.org, MPLC (Motion Picture Licensing Corporation), www.mplc.com, CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International), www.ccli.com. These web sites provide information, cost, and applications for video, film, and music.

technology, tap into your church's resource people. Go slow, do it right. We are talking media in worship, not for broadcast. "Studies have shown that broadcasts of church culture are ineffective at evangelism and discipleship."¹² Even though this is for the congregation, we must do the best job we can, "as unto the Lord" (1 Cor10:31). Read—there are plenty of books on the "emerging church" and post-modern preachers which will give insight into the Image-driven culture.¹³

Ted Koppel interviewed a man who had been trapped on an oil rig during a fire. "Koppel asked the man how he had the courage to jump from a platform fifteen stories high into water engulfed in flames. The man replied, 'because I was going to fry if I stayed on the platform!' That's what makes us jump."¹⁴ We cannot do post-modern ministry from a modern platform. The emerging church is making the shift to this new platform where the gospel is communicated in Image-driven worship. "As we move further into digital culture and become more mature in our practices, we as the church will realize that worship remains the same and that people still seek an encounter of God through such 'traditional' elements as Scripture, Communion, prayer, community, contemplation, participation, and an awareness of transcendence."¹⁵ Those in the emerging church want to take an "ancient—future" approach to worship. They want the mystery along with much of the tradition but translated in a language they can understand. It may mean something as simple as candles or a picture of a stain-glass window projected onto a screen. The screen is the icon for the post-modern culture.

¹² Len Wilson, *The Wired Church*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999) , 43.

¹³ For more information on the emerging church and its leadership, refer to the bibliography and Appendix E, (Post-modern Web Sites).

¹⁴ Leonard Sweet. *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*. (Nashville, TN" Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998) , 134-135.

¹⁵ Len Wilson and Jason Moore. *Digital Storytellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 202) , 110.

What makes the emerging church so distinctive is “image-driven” worship. “This has been where some of the boldest and most exciting work has been done in the past ten years, but it has also been the area where there were fewest guides and teachers.”¹⁶ One concern for every pastor is that a worship service is not designed to merely look “slick,” but rather to point people to the savior.

To copy what a successful church is doing, thinking your church will net the same results, can be dangerous. “The diversity represented by Generation X and even more by the next generation, who are variously called the ‘Mosaics’ and the ‘Millennials’, means that no single approach is going to be appropriate for all.”¹⁷ The reality is that one size only fits most. The common language is still media, but is dependent upon how effective it is used.

In the movie, “The Passion of The Christ” the story of the crucifixion and resurrection was presented to a spiritually hungry culture.¹⁸ The movie undeniably made countless people aware of a savior who loves the human race. “As people of faith frequent movie theaters, Hollywood will make more movies aimed at them.”¹⁹ In December 2006, a Christmas movie was released called, “The Nativity Story.”²⁰ As the culture becomes more and more image conscious, Hollywood will continue to produce for a religious market.

With the overthrow of foundationalism, the door is left open for the church

¹⁶ Jonny Baker and Doug Gay. *Alternative Worship: Resources from and for the Emerging Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003) , 24

¹⁷ Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes In How We Do Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002) , 131.

¹⁸ The motion picture, *The Passion of the Christ*, directed by Mel Gibson, was first released in 2004. The movie depicts the final twelve hours of the life of Christ.

¹⁹ Mark Moring,, “Big Screen Jesus,” *Christianity Today*, August 2006 , 18.

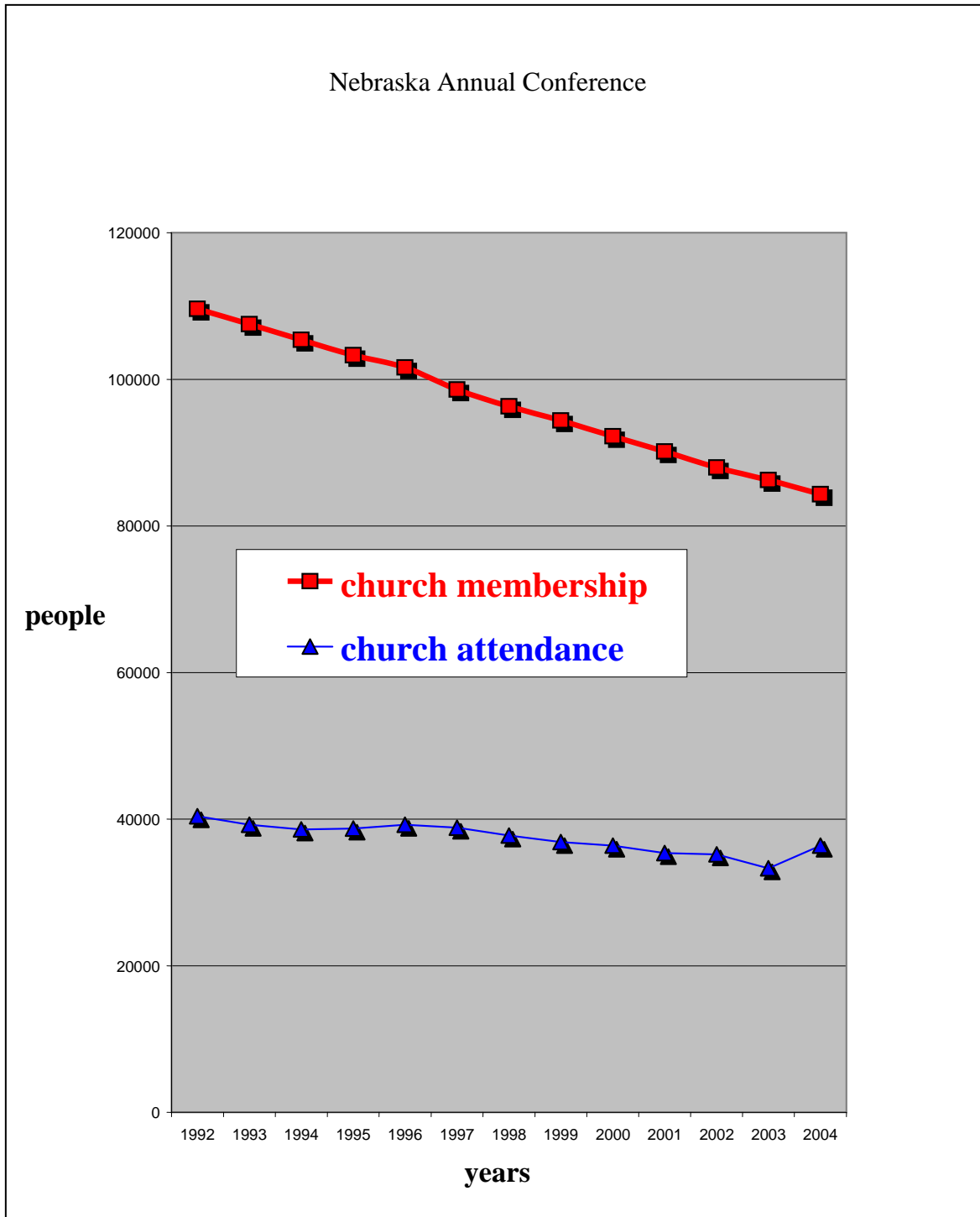
²⁰ *The Nativity Story* was directed by Catherine Hardwicke in 2006. The movie follows the life of Mary and Joseph, their journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus.

to present to a wandering culture a gospel of love and hope, of forgiveness and reconciliation, of healing and salvation. The emerging church with its Image-driven worship is helping to prepare the people for revival.

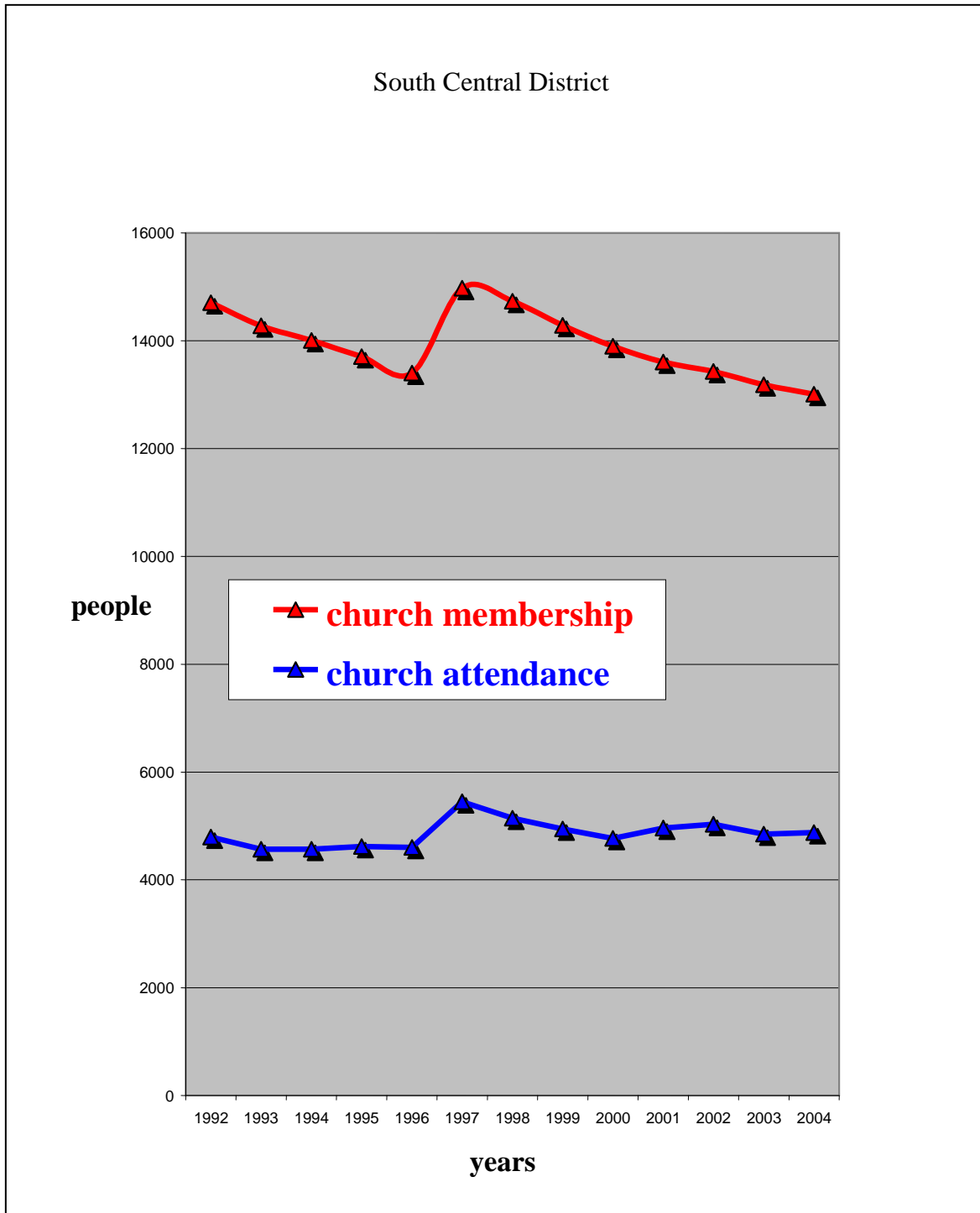
This story about John Wesley takes place of a century after Wesley died. “An elderly African gentleman visited King’s Road Chapel, where Wesley is buried, and asked the minister-in-charge if he might visit Wesley’s grave. The priest accompanied the man to the grave where the man stood in silence for a moment. He then asked ‘Might a body pray here?’ The minister replied, ‘feel free’. The man knelt and with one hand on Wesley’s grave and the other uplifted to the heavens, he prayed: ‘Lord ... Do it again! Lord...Do it again!’”²¹ May it become the prayer heard from this emerging culture. Lord, do it again! Lord, do it again! Send revival.

²¹ Leonard Sweet. *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 173.

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D

Congregational Development Team Report

2005 Annual Conference Session
delivered by Wayne Alloway

Rev. Alloway is the Sr. Pastor of St. Mark United Methodist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Rev. Alloway was asked to chair this committee by Bishop Ann Shearer.

During my twenty-two years of ministry in Nebraska, I've had the privilege of addressing our Annual Conference on several occasions, both as Registrar and as Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry. At those conferences, I announced the candidates for ministry to this distinguished body. Today, however, I'm here in a different capacity; today, I'm here on behalf of the Congregational Development Team, to announce far more sobering news: our Annual Conference **is dying**.

In 1970, the membership of the Nebraska Conference was 148,004 members. On December 31, 2004, the Conference membership stood at 84,337. That's a loss of 63,667 members. **63,667 members – gone.**

We also have 14,012 *fewer* people in average worship attendance – which is roughly the equivalent of losing our current worship attendance in the Northeast, Northwest, Central, and South Central Districts *combined*.

Which means: if the current rate of membership loss continues, we will no longer be a viable annual conference by 2015, based on the criteria set forth in our Book of Discipline.

That's the bad news.

The good news is this: We are still big enough, strong enough, and (I believe) wise enough to seize an opportunity to reverse our downward spiral! **Now is the time to rekindle the fire of faith in the churches of the Nebraska Annual Conference!**

The decisions we make at this annual conference will have a profound effect on whether we move forward and thrive, or continue our rapid decent into mediocrity and oblivion. *The choice is ours.*

We claim, as a conference, that our core purpose is to go into the world and make disciples of Jesus Christ; yet, in reality, disciple-making is often relegated to committees that exist in the margins of our budgets and at the bottom of our priority lists. That has to change. The “main thing” has to become the main thing, once again. (cont.)

Nebraska has a population of 1.7 million people. According to a Percept demographic study, approximately 11% of the population already has a United Methodist preference. This translates to roughly 191,000 people, who say they prefer the United Methodist Church.

Now, the membership of the United Methodist Church in Nebraska currently stands at 84,337; in other words, only 44% of the people in Nebraska with a preference for United Methodism are actually members of our churches! This means we have the potential for reaching almost 107,000 people in our communities who already prefer us to other denominations! And that's not even counting the thousands of people with neither a church affiliation nor a denominational preference.

But how do we reach these folks?

Experts in the field of church growth and development believe one of the best ways for reaching *new* people is by planting *new* churches where these people live. A point of clarification here: a new church can be the result of a merger between three or more existing congregations, or it can be a second campus for one congregation, or it can be a new church start—but experts say “new churches” (in whatever form they take) are the way to go.

Stephen Compton, the director of Congregational Development in the North Carolina Annual Conference, and author of “Rekindling the Mainline: New Life through New Churches” offers this rationale:

1. Statistically speaking, new people in new areas are more likely to join new churches, rather than old churches. I'm sure we can all think of exceptions, but that's generally the way it goes.
2. New churches are often more likely to be open to new people. Who among us hasn't dealt with church members who claim to be “open to growth” – but who also say they want their church to remain “just the way it is now” – where “everybody knows everybody else.” Of course, this mindset is antithetical to growth and development. You can't remain “just the way you are,” and grow, too. Growth *is* change.
3. New churches find it easier to live out new models of mission and ministry. Again, this harkens back in the mindset of doing things the way they've always been done; you can't embark on new ministries, or new styles of worship, if you are determined to follow the status quo.

So, new churches have some definite advantages when it comes to attracting new people – but how do we go about starting these new congregations?

Well, the Congregational Development Team is suggesting the implementation of a proven method of church planting that has been highly successful in other United Methodist Conferences. (cont.)

First and foremost, a new church will need the *right pastor*. Not everyone is called to this type of ministry, and it's imperative that the right person be appointed to the right place, at the right time, if a new church is to be successful.

As for "the *right place*," that's almost as important as finding the right pastor – but "the right place" doesn't necessarily mean a permanent facility – or even land! Experience has shown that the most successful new churches initially meet in rented facilities (land is typically purchased years later).

And, as for the *right time*: the time is **NOW**.

The Congregational Development Team is proposing that the Nebraska Annual Conference plan for at least one new church start in the next 12 months, and two additional church starts within the twelve months following that. We further propose that new churches receive a subsidy from our Annual Conference limited to no more than three years, on a declining scale.

I see some folks out there with their arms folded across their chests, and their head shaking from side to side. I'm guessing you folks are thinking to yourselves, "We can't do this." Well, I'm here to tell you: **We have to!** We *have* to do this, or our conference will die – and I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to "go gently into that good night."

I believe in the future of the Nebraska Annual Conference.

I agreed to chair the Congregational Development Team because I believe that as long as there's still breath in this part of the body of Christ, there's still hope for our future. I believe that God is calling us (as a conference) to greater heights of dynamic, meaningful, inspiring, worship, and I believe God is calling us to grow in our faith and in our love and in our service to our community and the world. But, most of all, I believe that God is calling us to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

We can do this.

We **must**. (end)

APPENDIX E

Post-modern Websites

<http://www.allenon.net>
<http://www.alphalink.com>
<http://www.aquachurch.com>
<http://www.awesome-sites.com>
<http://www.barna.org>
<http://www.bellview.org>
<http://www.beyondmag.com>
<http://www.bluefish.com>
<http://www.breakpoint.org>
<http://www.brewingculture.org>
<http://www.campuschurch.net>
<http://www.christdesert.org>
<http://www.christianityandrenewal.com>
<http://www.christianitytoday.com>
<http://www.communitychristian.org>
<http://www.crc.org>
<http://www.crossrds.org>
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu>
<http://www.drinkdeep.org>
<http://www.easumbandy.com>
<http://www.ecclesiahouston.org>
<http://www.emergentvillage.com>
<http://www.emergentys.com>
<http://www.ethnicarvest.org>
<http://www.evotional.com>
<http://www.ginghamsburg.org>
<http://www.ginkworld.net>
<http://www.gocn.org>
<http://www.godscounter.com>
<http://www.goodnewsmag.org>
<http://www.highway.org>
<http://www.jesusnet.net>
<http://www.jordoncooper.com>
<http://www.josiahspice.com>
<http://www.leonardsweet.com>
<http://www.lroom.org>
<http://www.midnightoil.net>

<http://www.missionhills.org>
<http://www.mosaic.org>
<http://www.mrshowbiz.com>
<http://www.newsong.net>
<http://www.next-wave.org>
<http://www.northcoastchurch.org>
<http://www.pantego.org>
<http://www.pastors.com>
<http://www.pathwayschurch.org>
<http://www.phutruue.com>
<http://www.reelspirituality.org>
<http://www.reimagine.org>
<http://www.rockharbor.org>
<http://www.sacramentis.com>
<http://www.saddlebackfamily.com>
<http://www.santacruz bible.org>
<http://www.screenvue.com>
<http://www.sermonspice.com>
<http://www.sofn.org.uk>
<http://www.ship-of-fools.com>
<http://www.solomonsporch.com>
<http://www.spiritgarage.org>
<http://www.tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com>
<http://www.tpc.org>
<http://www.theaterchurch.com>
<http://www.themeetinghouse.ca/>
<http://www.the-next~wave.org>
<http://www.thewater.org>
<http://www.theooze.com>
<http://www.vintagefaith.com>

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The Visual Bible: John. Dallas, TX: Visual Entertainment, Inc.

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(also available: www.circuitrider.com)

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- Anderson, Neil T. and Elmer Towns. *Rivers of Revival*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997. Looking at revival and what the ingredients are when it happens.
- Baker, Jonny and Doug Gay. *Alternative Worship: Resources From and For the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. Varying from traditional worship. Some of the biggest changes taking place in the past 10-15 years. Filled with examples of Alt worship including a CD-ROM. A how to book on Alt Worship.
- Barna, George. *Grow Your Church From the Outside: Understanding the Unchurched and How to Reach Them*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2002. Valuable information for the church to know. What are the likes and dislikes of the unchurched and how they might be reached.
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- _____. *Revolution: Worn Out on Church? Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005. The church as we know it has changed and continues to change because of revolutionary thinking. A more Biblical definition of what church can be.
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- _____. *The State of the Church: 2005. A National Research Study*. Ventura, CA: The Barna Group, 2005. Statistics concerning (1) religious practices of Americans, (2) some of the core religious beliefs of Americans, (3) life perspectives of Americans and, (4) a subjective statement about what some of these numbers and patterns may mean within the bigger picture of American spirituality.
- Barna, George, Gary M. Burge, Richard Allen Farmer, Lisa Harper, Jack W. Hayford, Kim Hill, Bruce H. Leafblad, John S. Miller, Leonard Sweet, and Robert Webber.

Experience God in Worship. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2000. Ten authors offer their perspectives on various forms of worship in the emerging church: Worship in the Third Millennium, Convergence, Liturgical, Contemporary, Evangelical, African-American, Charismatic, and Gen-X Worship, and lastly Re-creating Worship for a Postmodern World.

Barrett, Lois Y., gen. ed. *The Gospel and our Culture Series: A series to foster the missional encounter of the gospel with North American culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003. The world has changed and is changing. Christians live in the ancient-present story centered in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. How do we tell that story?

Bausch, Michael G. *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*. Alban Institute, 2002. The value in using multimedia in worship as a cultural language. When is appropriate and when is it best to limit media.

Berger, Arthur Asa, ed. *The Postmodern Presence: Readings on Postmodernism in American Culture and Society*. Walnut Creek, London, New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1998. A look at the way postmodernism has manifested itself in our society and our institutions.

_____. *The Portable Postmodernist*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2003. Using the presupposition that postmodernism comes after modernism, a road is followed describing its role in culture.

Bright, Bill. *Preparing for the Coming Revival: How to Lead a Successful Fasting and Prayer Gathering*. Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications, 1995. Working with the presupposition that the church can not create revival but can prepare for it: Believers seek God through prayer and fasting.

Brueggemann, Walter, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993. Lectures that have been prepared in order to reinforce the positive opportunity in mainline churches to minister in this pluralistic, postmodern environment.

Burke, Spencer. *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations about God, Community and Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003. A type of bridge that helps in the dialog between the emerging church and the established church. (check out TheOoze.com).

Carson, D.A. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. A discussion of the Biblical boundaries intended for the emerging church. Much discussion was devoted to the thought of Brian McLaren and Steve Chalke.

Chilcote, Paul W., ed. *The Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm For Renewal*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002. The Wesleyan paradigm of renewal was controversial, it took the message of salvation to the people and didn't wait for the people to come to hear the message. The new paradigm is really learning again, how to take the Gospel to the people.

Collins, Kenneth J., *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003. The journey of the founder of Methodism. Wesley's theology is examined along with the people, places and events that influenced his thinking. (i.e. his mother, Susanna Wesley, his brother, Charles Wesley, the Anglican church, the new religion called Methodism, and the Moravians, England and the New Colonies, his Aldersgate experience, George Whitefield, Wilberforce, and the women in his life.)

Colson, Chuck. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999. Colson is the contemporary voice that warns the church that postmodernism has arrived. The church has a moral responsibility as well as a biblical mandate to engage culture, exposing its philosophy and then responding in Christlikeness.

Conder, Tim. *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. The church must open itself up to change. Instead of deconstruction of the existing church there can be a collaborative construction of the future church.

Curran, Sue. *The Praying Church: Principles and Power of Corporate Praying*. Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1995. The practical helps for a corporate prayer ministry. Drawing from past times of revival.

Cymbala, Jim. *Break through Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003. Some wonderful insights as to what can happen because of prayer when we get tired of the status quo and begin reaching out for more of God.

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1997. A call back to what is authentic. It is a call for churches to return to prayer and the Word of God.

Dawn, Marva J. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995. Marva Dawn writes as a concern that the church in their reaching out, does not give in to culture. The bar should not be lowered but rather congregations should be brought up to appropriate worship. Dr. Dawn presents another side to what is real worship in light of the emerging church.

Dearborn, Tim A., Scott Coil, eds., *Worship at the Next Level: Insight from Contemporary Voices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004. Some great insight as to what worship is and is not.

Deere, Jack. *Surprised By The Power of The Spirit: Discovering How God Speaks and Heals Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. A Dallas Seminary professor provides a biblical defense for the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

Detweiler, Craig and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. Exploring the intersections between theology and popular culture.

Dorsett, Lyle W. *A Passion For Souls: The Life of D.L. Moody*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997. A wonderful book about Moody, the man of God. The focus is not theology, but rather the evangelist who has a love for God and a passion for people.

Eastman, Dick. *No Easy Road: Inspirational Thoughts On Prayer*. Toronto, Carlisle, Grand Rapids, Sydney, Johannesburg: Global Christian Publishers, 1971. Prayer is absolutely essential to productive living. Persistence is needed, because prayer is difficult. This book gives needed guidance to effective praying.

_____. *The Hour That Changes the World: A Practical Plan for Personal Prayer*. Toronto, Carlisle, Grand Rapids, Sydney, Johannesburg: Global Christian Publishers, 1978. Prayer is a discipline and takes commitment to develop. We are challenged to commit one hour a day to prayer, (see Matthew 26:40).

_____. *Love on It's Knees: Making a Difference by Praying for Others*. Toronto, Carlisle, Grand Rapids, Sydney, Johannesburg: Global Christian Publishers, 1978. To encourage the church to mobilize for prayer. The importance of praying for this generation, that it might be won to Christ.

Eastman, Dick and Jack Hayford. *Living and Praying In Jesus Name*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1988. Looking at the names of Christ and meditating on the character of Christ. What it means to pray in the name of Jesus.

Easum, Bill. *Leadership on the Other Side: No Rules, Just Clues*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000. The postmodern church needs a new kind of leader. Because the postmodern world is constantly changing, we are only given some clues as to what this kind of leadership looks like.

_____. *Leadership on the Otherside: No Rules, Just Clues*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000. The 'Otherside' is a way of describing what is needed in leadership in the emerging church.

Easum, Bill and Pete Theodore. *The Nomadic Church: Growing Your Congregation Without Owning the Building*. Nashville, TN: Abingdom Press, 2005. A practical guide for the nomadic church, (the church without a campus). The positive side of not owning property as well as the pitfalls of renting facilities. The nomadic church is an effective way of doing church.

- Erickson, Millard J., *The Postmodern World: Discerning the Times and the Spirit of Our Age*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002. Insight as to what culture is thinking with many illustrations from media and everyday life. Information that the church needs to know and understand in order to effectively minister in a postmodern world.
- Fiske, John. *MTV: Post-Structural, Post-Modern* in Arthur Asa Berger, ed., *The Post modern Presence: readings on Postmodernism in American culture and Society*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998. Insights of postmodernism as churches attempt to minister in the emerging culture.
- Fitch, David E. *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church From, Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism and Other Modern Maladies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005. How has evangelicalism surrendered its mandate to be the church? The church needs to reclaim its mission.
- Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding The Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1992. How to discover God through prayer. It is about seeking God's face so that we might be more like Him.
- Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. Exhorts God's people to live out the gospel within the postmodern culture rather than perpetuating the institution when culture is not even listening.
- Gibbs, Eddie. *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. The church is now faced with a generation of 18-35 year olds who are turning away from the church and are defining their own spiritual path. The church needs to be able to respond to the cultures shift from modernity to post-modernity. How do we now do ministry.
- Goll, Jim. *Kneeling On The Promises: Birthing God's Purposes through Prophetic Intercession*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1999. Not just a book on prayer. How to strategically pray with prophetic intercession. Praying what God has already promised.
- Graf, Jonathan and Lani C. Hinkle, eds. *My House Shall Be a House of Prayer*. Colorado Springs, CO: Pray! Books, 2001. There is a distinction between a Prayerless Church, a Prayer Ministry Church and a House of Prayer Church. How to move toward a House of Prayer Church.
- Haggard, Ted. *Primary Purpose: Making It Hard for People to go to Hell from your City*. Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1995. Ways to have a spiritual impact on a community by changing the spiritual condition of the community.

- Hart, Kevin. *Postmodernism, A Beginners Guide*. Oxford, England: One World Publications, 2004. Written as lectures not research. An introduction to postmodernism with the question addressed to the relationship between postmodernism and religion.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *A Better Hope: Resources For a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Post modernity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2000. Not allowing ourselves to be defined by what we are against because God has given us a lot to be for. The Christian has much to hope for.
- Hayford, Jack. *Living the Spirit Formed Life: Growing in the 10 Principles of Spirit-Filled Discipleship*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001. This book extends an invitation to be fulfilled and to mature in the faith by practicing disciplines found in Scripture.
- Herrick, James A. *The making of the New Spirituality: The Eclipse of the Western Religious Tradition*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003. Exploring some of the new religious movements coming on the scene in Western culture. Spirituality is no longer confined to the sanctuary or the synagogue.
- Hipps, Shane. *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. Assumes that churches have already engaged the culture but cautions church leaders to ‘weigh out’ what unintended consequences might be.
- Howard, Evan. *Praying the Scriptures: A Field Guide For Your Spiritual Journey*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. A practical guide in using Scriptures as the bases for prayer. Praying the Scriptures by making them your prayer.
- Hunter III, George. *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987. This book has to do with church growth and the targeting of people groups. Wesley’s insight of targeting ‘responsive’ people, and how he used indigenous music, language and culture. Wesley had his hand on the culture of the day.
- _____. *How to Reach Secular People*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992. Insight as to how to better communicate the gospel message to an ever growing population of secular people.
- Hybels, Bill. *Too Busy Not To Pray: Slowing Down to be with God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. It’s learning to focus on the best, not just the good. Learning to make God your priority through prayer in everything you do.
- Jeremiah, David. *Prayer the Great Adventure*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1997. No need to feel guilty because your prayer life may not be up to par—but we are told what we might be missing by not spending time in prayer.

- Jewell, John P. *Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004. Can the church take what is technologically innovative and use it to serve the church?
- Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001. A book that helps the preacher ask important questions... Who is my listener? Many helpful ways of sharing Biblical truths with the postmodern, including the use of film as the bridge.
- Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. *Revive Us Again: Your Wakeup Call for Spiritual Renewal*. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001. This world-renowned Old Testament scholar provides an understanding of Biblical revival by examining revivals in the Bible and in particular, 2 Chronicles 7:14.
- Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity For New Generations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2003. A realistic approach of how the church in a post-modern culture communicate with the emerging culture.
- _____. *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004. With the obvious absence of 18-35 year olds in worship, it's time to ask, what are the needed changes? What does worship look like?
- Knox, Noelle. "Make the Effort for Mass". usatoday news, 2005.
<http://usatoday.com/news/world/2005-08-21-pope-germany-x-htm>. (accessed 21 August 2005).
- Ladd, George Eldon, *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974). Ladd addresses many of the difficult questions in scripture. It has held as a foundation for evangelical theology.
- Mains, David, *Healing the Dysfunctional Church Family: When Destructive Family Patterns Infiltrate the Body of Christ*. USA, Canada, England: Victor books, 1992. What a dysfunctional church family can look like and how to get healthy. How to rediscover wholeness.
- Marsden, George M. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003. A great historical account of one man's life and influence in the religious life of New Englanders. Edwards played an important role in 18th century revivals in the North East.
- McLaren, Brian D. *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. Strategies for bringing the unchanging gospel to an ever changing culture.

- _____. *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism As Dance in the Postmodern Matrix*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. Good insight as to how to evangelize in our postmodern culture. Learning the language of the postmodern and not following the presuppositions of evangelism in the modern culture.
- _____. *The Last Word and the Word After That: A Tale of Faith; Doubt, and a New Kind of Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005. Looking at various texts in new and different ways. A book of asking hard questions without merely looking for pat answers or at least familiar answers.
- Miller, Kim. *Handbook For Multi-sensory Worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999. A number of worship services used at Ginghamburg UMC to reach out to the postmodern worshipper.
- Minatrea, Milfred. *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004. There is a church because there is a mission. Help for moving from a maintenance mentality to a missional church.
- Morgenthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1995. The subject is worship, but more specifically worship evangelism. How do the two work together? Can the saint and seeker worship in the same service? What does the church need to do in order to rethink cultural relevance?
- Mulholland, M. Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Many of the same points concerning spiritual formation can be seen in ministry with the post-modern
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951. Although written in the mid 20th Century, this book is relevant in ministering to the postmodern. The age old questions of Christ being presented within the cultural context.
- Nixon, Paul. *Healing Spiritual Amnesia: Remembering what it means to be the church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004. We are reminded to remember what our mandate of the church is to be. Not to return to the 1950's but to return to our spiritual roots.
- Packer, J.I. and Thomas C. Oden. *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Methodically presents Biblical doctrines of belief subscribed by evangelical educational institutions and para-church ministries. The conclusion is the evangelical consensus.
- Penner, Myron B., ed. *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005. An informative look at the issues brought on by post

modernity. Also an attempt to explain and dispel the confusion surrounding the subject.

Pollock, Michael, Gailyn VanRheenen, Douglas McConnell. *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005. Identifying what is happening in culture, seeing the trends and finding out how to better do world missions. Change has happened and continues to challenge the best approach to missions.

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1985. Media has had and continues to have a huge impact on culture. The author specifically deals with the effects of television, not just as entertainment but as learning.

Raschke, Carl. *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Post modernity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004. A book sharing the value of embracing Post modernity. The gospel message is a constant but the presentation may vary. Evangelicals must be careful they are not rejecting all that is postmodern only to preserve modernity and what the enlightenment conceived.

Riley, Naomi Schaefer, *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2005. Traces religious trends on the university campus. Generation M is looking for more in life and wants to share what they believe with culture.

Rosell, Garth, ed. *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D.L. Moody*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999. A great collection of sermons of the 19th century evangelist. The messages demonstrating the love and passion of a Godly man.

Ruibal, Ruth. *Unity in the Spirit: Lessons from the Scriptures and Life in Cali*, Colombia, Lynnwood, WA: Transformations Media, 2002. With the martyrdom of Julio Ruibal, his wife Ruth stresses the need for unity in the church so that transformation might take place.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983. A look at how a Christian is to live in a post-Christian culture.

Schaller, Lyle. *Discontinuity and Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future*. Nashville, TX: Abingdon Press, 1999. There is always the need for the church to redefine the role it plays. To connect with culture, some congregations now see themselves as a regional church.

Sheets, Dutch. *How To Pray For Lost Loved Ones*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001. The labor intensive responsibility of praying for the salvation of family and friends. How to pray for the lost by standing on Biblical principles.

_____. *Intercessory Prayer: How God Can Use Your Prayers to Move Heaven and Earth*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996. Wonderful teaching on prayer. How to pray for and stand in the gap for others. What it means to be an intercessor.

_____. *Praying For America: How Your Prayers Can Change the Course of a Nation*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001. Written after 9/11, we are challenged with a call to prayer for our nation. We are reminded of the church's mandate to pray and so change the course of history.

Silvoso, Ed. *Prayer Evangelism*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2000. Transforming the spiritual atmosphere of a community through prayer.

_____. *That None Should Perish: How to Reach Entire Cities for Christ Through Prayer Evangelism*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1994. Preparing entire cities to be receptive to the Gospel through prayer. A book on how to pray cities into the Kingdom by breaking down the barriers.

Slaughter, Michael. *Out On The Edge: A Wake-up call for Church Leaders on the Edge of the Media Reformation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. The Sr. Pastor of Ginghamburg UMC relates how a church can learn to use electronic and visual media to connect with people during worship.

Smith, Chuck, Jr., *The End of the World...As We Know It*. Colorado Springs, CO: Water Brook Press, 2001. The changes going on in postmodern culture has created new opportunities for Christians to influence their world – here are some helps.

_____. *There Is a Season: Authentic, Innovative Ministry in Popular Culture*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001. The operative word is 'change', and change is what is happening. Can the church get a hold of the opportunity for a new way of doing ministry in an emerging culture.

Smith, Efrem and Phil Jackson. *The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting With the Movement Shaping Our Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. Ministering to the Hip-Hop Church. Using Hip-Hop to communicate the Gospel.

Smith, R. Scott. *Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Postmodernism in the Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005. The author provides direction in responding to the postmodern in a Christ honoring way.

Snyder, Howard. *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989. An attempt to construct a theology of renewal. How can an institutional church be renewed? Because of the date of the publishing of this book, the author does not evaluate post-modernism as much as he approaches the material historically.

Stackhouse, John. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. Oxford, England: University Press, 2002. A Christian apologist that presents a convincing argument for the Christian faith without attacking world religions. It is difficult to do this in a pluralistic religious culture.

Stetzer, Ed and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006. The way you do things does impact your community. A help in finding the right principles that work in your context.

Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. Presented information concerning Jesus Christ, which in turn allows the reader to examine and then make a decision. Written as a journalist investigation, the author methodically builds the case for believing in and trusting in Christ. A convincing apologetic.

Sweet, Leonard. *Eleven Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. Where is your church? Bringing together 'word and image'.

_____. *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999. Looking for "transformation" in a postmodern culture. How to make the shift to a new paradigm. Loaded with great quotes. Helps us think new thoughts about church.

_____. *Aqua Church: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1999. Provides leadership insight for church leaders to thrive in today's culture.

_____. *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000. A description of how to live in the future while living in the light of the past. Culture changes, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Hebrews 13:8.

_____. *Carpe Mañana: Is Your Church Ready to seize tomorrow?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001. Culture has moved whether the church does or not. The question is, will the church be able to seize its opportunities.

_____. *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998. We are busy and heading somewhere. Allow God to do the shaping that makes life real.

- _____. *Soul Salsa*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000. How can I learn to live a Biblical faith on a daily basis in this postmodern world.
- _____. *Summoned to Lead*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004. Leaders are not born nor are they made but rather they are called to lead.
- Sweet, Leonard, gen. ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003. The five perspectives on the emerging church come from Andy Crouch, editor-in-chief of *Regeneration Quarterly*. Michael Horton, editor-in-chief of *Modern Reformation* magazine. Frederica Mathews-Green, NPR commentator and columnist. Brian D. McLaren, author and pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church. Erwin Raphael McManus, writer and pastor of Mosaic.
- Sweet, Leonard, Brian D. McLaren, Jerry Haselmayer, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003. An opportunity given by these three authors to help in transition from modern ministry to ministry in the postmodern matrix.
- Tenney, Tommy. *The God Chasers: "My Soul Follows Hard After Thee"*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1998. What it means to chase after God and what it looks like when God allows Himself to be caught.
- Teykl, Terry. *Pray the Price*. Muncie, IN: Prayer Point Press, 1997. The long overdue call for prayer to awaken the sleeping mainline institution of the United Methodist Church.
- Tomlinson, Dave. *The Post-Evangelical*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2003. The call to hear and listen to the post-evangelical. Post-evangelicalism is not necessarily a move away from orthodoxy, but to remain true, we must understand it's changing cultural context.
- Towns, Elmer. *Praying the Lord's Prayer For Spiritual Breakthrough*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997. A wonderful way of beginning each day, is to pray the Lord's Prayer. A great help in understanding and praying the Lord's Prayer for spiritual breakthrough.
- _____. *Putting an End to Worship Wars*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997. The current battle in churches is over worship. There are six basic worship styles: Evangelistic Church, Bible Expositional Church, Renewal Church, Body Life Church, Liturgical Church and Congregational Church. There are varieties of traditions, with value in each.
- Towns, Elmer L. and Ed Stetzer. *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004. What are the boundaries for the church? How far do the boundaries extend for the Emerging Church? What should be the Biblical Boundaries?

Tozer, A.W. *Tozer on Worship and Entertainment*. Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1997. Tozer points out some dangers when the church goes too far in making congregations too comfortable in worship. The real danger is that worship can become 'man' centered and not 'God' centered.

Tuttle, Robert G. Jr. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1978. Insight into the life of the founder of Methodism. How his theology developed and how it affected his life decisions.

Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994. We have now moved from modernity to postmodern. No absolutes...Postmodern thought...Postmodern art...Postmodern society...Postmodern religion. The question explored: Is it good or bad.

_____. *Loving God with All Your Mind: Thinking as a Christian in the Postmodern World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1987. Part of loving God means to love Him with our minds. As Christians we are to follow truth, studying the various disciplines. This is a way of honoring God in the world in which we live.

Volf, Miroslav and William Katerberg, eds. *The future of Hope: Christian Tradition Aid Modernity and Post modernity*. Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004. A series of essays on the future of hope in the midst of modernity and post modernity.

Ward, Pete. *Liquid Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002. The church is a living organism and must not stand still. It has to be "liquid" always looking for new ways to do ministry in postmodernism.

_____. *God at the Mall: Youth Ministry that meets kids where they're at*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1997. Those working with youth will find this insightful.

Webber, Robert, *Planning Blended Worship: The Creative Mixture of Old and New*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. The bringing together of traditional and contemporary worship in a new and creative way. Blending worship into something that is both ancient and future.

_____. *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. The community of believers is instrumental in conversion. Jesus is encountered through the church as it embodies truth. It is in community that one seeks to live out the kingdom of God.

Wells, David. *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005. Both modernity and post modernity are a reflection of our current culture. Culture is not either/or but rather both/and.

White, James Emery. *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. The author identifies us as living in “serious times”. We are given examples of how people like William Wilberforce, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, St. Patrick, St. Benedict, C.S. Lewis, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther moved against the grain of culture. We begin by taking our place in the church as a member.

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VITA

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